THE STORY OF
JEAN VALJEAN

(SPECIAL EDITION)

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PREFACE

"The Story of Jean Valjean" is an abridged edition of Victor Hugo's famous book *Les Miserables*, originally written in French and published in 10 volumes in 1862 The fame and popularity of the book can well be guessed, from the fact, that when it was published, it appeared in twelve languages almost at the same time, an event altogether unprecedented in the history of literature The purpose of the editor has been, to present the attractive story of Jean Valjean in simple English Long descriptions and unnecessary narrative portions have been carefully avoided

The title, *Les Miserables*, means the unfortunate ones. The story of Jean Valjean is the story of an unfortunate person, who was able to help other unfortunate persons in life There is in the story a deep human interest, with an emphasis on the abiding qualities of faith, hope and love As the only practical solution to all the problems of life, individual and collective, Victor Hugo has rightly emphasised these There is no doubt that the story fascinates the growing minds of our country

The story is not lacking in the elements of adventure and heroism. These add interest to the story, and to the universal appeal which is inherent throughout Clarity and directness, both in thought and expression, have not been lost sight of The difficulties of French pronunciation and French names of places and persons, need not be considered a serious handicap

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VICTOR HUGO

(Author of Les Miserables)

Victor Hugo, the author of 'Les Miserables' from which the story of Jean Valjean is gathered, was born at Besancon in France on February 26, 1802. His father was a military officer of the French Empire and a strong supporter of Napoleon Bonaparte. Having had to live under very disturbing political conditions in France and in Europe, Victor's childhood was naturally unsettled. He had to wander from place to place, and from station to station, in a number of European countries, including Switzerland and Italy.

While still a boy, he composed several poems and won prizes for them. His style and talents brought him into prominence, and gave him something to live on. Almost from his seventeenth year, he published, in quick succession, a number of dramas, poems and letters. He was not yet thirty, when he reached the height of his career. He was the foremost among living authors of the time, in European literature, a position which he held until his death in 1885.

His experiences of travel and army-life gave a meditative trend to his thoughts, while he was yet a child. When his father was in Italy, Victor was put under the instruction of an old priest, who undoubtedly influenced his young ward. Later, however, the sorrows of the people who suffered under the tyranny of their arbitrary rulers, touched the tender heart of Hugo deeply, and made him democratic in sympathy.

He took an active interest in the politics of the time. He was raised to the peerage in 1845, and in 1848, he was elected a Deputy to the Constituent Assembly. At first he showed Conservative tendencies. But when Napoleon III

proclaimed himself king, Victor Hugo asserted the rights of the people and the constitution He had to flee to the Isle of Guernsey and live under English protection There he lived in an attic He meditated upon the misery and contradictions of the world The famous book 'LES MISERABLES', which he began in 1848, was published in 1862

While at Guernsey, Victor Hugo interested himself in the business of the people, lending money to start young men in trade, procuring private medical attention for the sick, and finding help for orphans His charity was unlimited No destitute or hungry person ever asked in vain for a meal at his house No neighbour's child ever went cold and hungry, through the most severe winter. This was all the more remarkable, seeing that Hugo was by no means a rich man No wonder, therefore, that he won for himself a place in the hearts of all, and that the poor and the down-trodden ever looked upon him as their great saviour.

In a figurative sense, all intellectual France sat at his feet, while he, "the prophet and high-priest of liberty," instructed them in the world and its sorrow He was a very great poet and man of letters Europe sincerely looked upon him as the "patriarch of liberty and literature." He was supreme in the field of literature

His death occurred on May 22, 1885, when he was 83 years of age. His last wishes were expressed in a *memorandum* written a few months before his death, in which he had said: "I give 50,000 francs to the poor. I wish to be taken to the grave in their hearse. I refuse the prayers of all churches I ask for a prayer from every human soul. I believe in God."

French names occurring in the book with corresponding English pronunciation.

Arras	Ar-ras
Baptistine	Ba-tis-tin
Bienvenu	Bya-ve-nu
Cosette	Ko-zet
Digne	Din(ye)
Fantine	Fa-tin
Fauchelevent	Fosh-l(e)-va
Javert	Zha-ver
Jean Valjean	Zha Val-zha
Jondrette	Zho-dret
Les Miserables	Lay Mizerable
Madeleine	Ma-d(e)lan
Magloir	Mag-lwar
Montfermeil	Mo-fer-ma
Rue Plumet	Ru Plu-ma
Thenardier	Te-nar-dya

These do not pretend to give the exact sounds, but they may help the student to pronounce the names more correctly than he would if he were left to his own devices.

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1 THE GOOD BISHOP

Charles François-Bienvenu Myriel was born in France during the stormy period of the Revolution and experienced its horrors. The decay of French society, at the time, the ruin of his own family, and the tragic sights of '93 roused in him ideas of renunciation and solitude. So, he resolved to dedicate the remaining years of his life to the service of humanity. In 1806, he was consecrated Bishop of Digne. When he took up his residence in Digne as the Bishop, he was accompanied by his sister, Mademoiselle Baptistine, who, though an old lady, was ten years younger than Charles Myriel. Their only servant was an aged woman, Madame Magloire.

As Bishop of Digne, Monsieur Myriel, devoted himself wholly to the service of the poor and needy, and lived a simple life. His heart overflowed with love for all.

The Bishop's palace at Digne was a spacious, beautiful building, standing in the midst of extensive grounds, in which grew magnificent trees. Next to the palace, however, was a hospital—a narrow, low, two-storeyed building, in a very small garden. Three days after the Bishop occupied his palace, he visited the wards in this hospital. After his visit, he invited the Superintendent of the hospital to his palace. The Superintendent had very great reverence and regard for the great Bishop; and the two were soon deep in conversation. "Monsieur," enquired the Bishop, "how many

patients are there in your hospital just now?'
"Twenty-six, Monseigneur" replied the Superintendent "I counted the same number," said the Bishop "But, don't you think that the hospital is very crowded?" "Yes, Monseigneur, it is" "Moreover," continued the Bishop, "when the sun shines, the garden is too small for the convalescents."

"But what can be done? Those of us who are in charge of the hospital have to be satisfied with the existing arrangements," replied the Superintendent.

The Bishop was silent for a while Then he looked at his own palace, and, turning to the Superintendent asked, "Monsieur, how many beds could this building accommodate?"

The Superintendent looked puzzled and was silent. So the Bishop continued:

"Listen, Monsieur Superintendent. In your hospital, there are twenty-six people in five or six small rooms. In this great palace, there are only three of us This building could easily hold sixty beds. If you will kindly take my house, I will have yours Really speaking, the smaller house is mine, the larger is the Hospital's. Restore mine to me; this home is yours."

Next day, the twenty-six poor patients were installed in the Bishop's house, and the Bishop took up his residence in the hospital.

From his stipend of fifteen thousand francs per annum, he set apart fourteen thousand francs for charity and kept only a thousand francs for himself. He made his round of visits in the

city regularly, and imparted his message more by practice than by precept. He always spoke gravely and paternally Whenever he spoke to the unfortunate people, he would use simple illustrations, to help them to learn the great truths he wanted to teach them

One day, a tragic event occurred in Digne. a man was condemned to death for murder. The chaplain of the prison was ill, and no priest could be found to attend the prisoner in his last moments The cure would not officiate for a condemned prisoner When the Bishop heard this, he said, "The cure is right It does not concern him, it concerns *me*" He went straight to the prison, found the condemned man and talked to him Forgetful of food and sleep, he spent the whole night with him, praying for his soul The next morning, when the prisoner was taken to the scaffold, the Bishop accompanied him. He mounted the cart with him and ascended the scaffold with him. The prisoner, who had been gloomy and horror-struck the previous evening, was now radiant with hope. The Bishop embraced him, and as the axe was about to sever the wretched man's head, he said, "Whom man kills, him God restoreth to life, he whom his brethren put away, findeth the Father Pray, believe, enter into life."

When the Bishop descended from the scaffold he appeared completely changed. That place of execution had made a deep impression on him. For many days, the Bishop appeared to be overwhelmed with feelings of sorrow and pity.

After that experience, the Bishop avoided passing the place of execution.

M. Myriel could be called at all hours to the bedside of the sick or the dying Lest people requiring his help should go away, finding the doors of his house bolted, he removed all the locks and bolts. At first, the two women of his family were very troubled at the dining-room doors being kept open always, the Bishop told them: "Have bolts for your own doors, if you like." However, they soon learnt to have his confidence. The Bishop often repeated to them, "The door of a physician should never be closed, the door of a priest should always be open."

Such was the Bishop of Digne.

2 THE CONVICT IS ENTERTAINED

M. Myriel was in his study. It was eight o'clock at night. Madame Magloire had just spread the cloth on the table and was preparing to serve the Bishop's supper. Plates had been laid on the table. The Bishop was on his way to the dining-room. At that moment there was a knock on the door. The Bishop said, "Come in." These words were the only words he was accustomed to utter, when he heard a knock on the door. The door opened wide, as if boldly pushed open by a vigorous man. A man entered. He carried his knapsack on his back, and his stick in his hand Seen by the firelight, there was a rough, hard, tired and fierce look in his eyes. The visitor was, indeed, far from pleasant.

Madame Magloire very nearly screamed; she trembled with fear Mademoiselle Baptistine turned, saw the man enter and started up from her chair half alarmed The Bishop turned and looked at the visitor quietly.

The stranger did not wait for the Bishop to ask him who he was He began to speak in a loud voice:

"Let me tell you straight I am Jean Valjean, a released convict I have spent nineteen years in the galleys Four days ago, I was released from prison and I started for Pontarlier which is my destination. These four days, I have been walking from Toulon To-day, I covered twelve leagues on foot I am tired When I reached this town in the evening, I went to an inn, but the inn-keeper, seeing my yellow passport, drove me out. I tried many other inns. Everywhere, I received the same treatment I thought that my home must be the prison. So I went back to prison, but the warder would not let me in. I lay down in the fields, but looking up at the sky, I feared it would rain, so I got up and walked on aimlessly. Then, I met a good woman who said, pointing to this house, 'Knock there.' I have knocked. Is this an inn? I shall pay: I have money. I have saved one hundred and nine francs, fifteen sous during the nineteen years of my life in gaol. I am tired. I am hungry. May I stay?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "put another plate on the table for our distinguished guest."

The man took three steps and came nearer the lamp on the table, to show himself fully to the Bishop "Stop," he cried, "You have not understood me I am a convict—a prisoner"

The Bishop did not say a word

The convict drew a sheet of paper from his pocket, holding it before the Bishop, he spoke again, "This is my yellow passport This yellow colour is enough to have me kicked out of any place. Can you read? I know how to read They have a school in the galleys They taught me Shall I read what is written on this yellow paper? *'Jean Valjean, a released convict, Native of* ('you won't care for that'); *'has been a prisoner for nineteen years, five for burglary, fourteen for attempted escape from prison Avoid this man He is dangerous'* 'Dangerous.' There you have it. Will you receive *me*? Is this some kind of an inn? Can I sleep here? Have you a stable? If so, that will do for me."

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "prepare a bed for our friend Spread sheets on the bed in the alcove for him."

As the Bishop gave one direction after another, the old lady carried out the good man's orders. Then, for the first time, the Bishop spoke to the man. "Monsieur, please sit down near the fire and warm yourself It is cold over there. You will dine with us. Your bed will be made ready while you dine. Do me the honour to be my guest." The convict's face ·essed surprise, doubt and joy.

"Am I really going to have food and lodging? You call me Monsieur Again I tell you, I am a convict Everywhere they call me, "You dog" Why don't you send me away? Oh! What a good lady that woman was, that sent me here? Supper and a bed to lie on! Am I dreaming? It is nineteen years since I slept on a bed No, no I cannot deceive myself. Are you really willing that I should stay? Then you must be good people Oh, yes, I shall pay well I beg your pardon, Monsieur Inn-keeper, your name please. You are an inn-keeper—am I right?"

"I am a priest," replied the Bishop

"Oh! a priest—a most noble one! Then, you do not want money So, you are the cure of the big church Yes, you are What a stupid fellow I am! You wear a cure's cap."

In the meantime, having somewhat satisfied himself that the Bishop really meant to give him supper, the ex-convict put down his knapsack and stick in a corner He had been holding them both, all this time, so that, the moment he heard the words 'get out', he could run out of the place. Then he sat near the table.

"You are kind, Monsieur Cure. A priest is always good Then you do not want me to pay you?"

"No, keep your money. You said you had a hundred and nine francs, didn't you?"

"And fifteen sous," added the man.

"How many years' saving is that?" asked the Bishop

"Nineteen years."

"Nineteen years!"

The Bishop sighed. He got up for a minute and shut the door Madame Magloire brought another plate and put it on the table.

"Put the plate as near the fire as you can," the Bishop instructed the woman. Then turning to the man, he added, "You must be feeling cold, Monsieur The wind is chill." Every time the Bishop called him "Monsieur," the man's face brightened; for ignominy thirsts for sympathetic treatment and respect

"This lamp burns feebly," said the Bishop. Immediately, Madame Magloire took the hint, brought two lighted silver candlesticks and put them on the table.

"Monsieur, you are exceedingly good. You don't drive me out You even light silver candlesticks for me! I have told you that I am a convict and yet you do not despise me," said Jean Valjean.

The Bishop took one of the hands of his strange guest and gently passing his own hand over it, said in a very kind, sympathetic tone: "You need not tell me who you are This house is not mine, it is Christ's So it does not ask a visitor for his name You are hungry and thirsty. You are, therefore, more welcome than all the others This house receives those that have no asylum. You are more at home here, than I. All that you see in this house is yours. You need not tell me who you are. I know it."

"You know me? Really?" the man

opened his eyes, astonished.

"Yes You are my dear brother," replied the Bishop, looking affectionately at the face of the dumb-founded ex-convict.

"You have seen much suffering, haven't you?" asked the Bishop.

"Oh! a great deal," replied Jean Valjean. "The red blouse, the ball and the chain, the plank to sleep on, the heat, the cold, the lash, the double chain for nothing, the dungeon for a mere word—even when sick, the chain. Ah, even dogs are happier I entered the galleys as a youth of twenty-seven. I am now forty-six. Nineteen years! This is my ticket of leave, this yellow paper. That is all."

"Yes," answered the Bishop "But you have now left the place of suffering"

Meanwhile, Madame Magloire had served supper. The Bishop sat down. He invited the convict to sit at his right hand. Mademoiselle Baptistine took her place at his left. The Bishop said grace. The man ate ravenously and did not say a word. It was a silent supper. After it was over, the Bishop said grace, and, turning to the man, said: "You must be in great need of sleep. I shall show you to your room." The ex-convict followed him. The house was so arranged, that to reach the alcove, one had to pass through the Bishop's bed-chamber. Just as they were passing through it, Madame Magloire was putting away the silver, in the cupboard, at the head of the Bishop's bed. She always did so, last thing at night.

The Bishop left his guest in the alcove, showing him his clean bed He gave him one of the candlesticks, and, just before saying "Good night" added, "To-morrow morning, before you go, you shall have a cup of warm milk"

"Thank you, Monsieur," said the man. Suddenly he made an unusual gesture, turned abruptly towards the Bishop, and casting a wild look upon him, exclaimed, "Ah, now indeed! You lodge me in your house without knowing that I . . . " He checked himself. The Bishop only said, "Rest, sleep well. You require it." Then he went into his own room.

When the alcove was occupied, a heavy curtain was drawn in the oratory, to hide the altar. As he was leaving, the Bishop knelt in front of the curtain and offered a short prayer. His guest was so exhausted, that he blew out the candle and fell sound asleep. Midnight struck as the Bishop entered his chamber. Within a few minutes everyone in the little house was asleep It was silent

3 THE CONVICT AWAKES

The Cathedral clock struck two. Jean Valjean woke up. It may surprise you, that such a tired man could not enjoy for long, the repose of sweet slumber. But he had never been accustomed to such a soft bed; and the sensation was too novel not to disturb his sleep. He had slept for four hours; and to one who had never had many hours of rest, that was sufficient.

He opened his eyes and gazed into silent space, then closed them to sleep again. But once one is disturbed, sleep comes less readily than at first. That, at any rate, was the case with Jean Valjean. He began to think, "Oh! the silver plates!"

The thought of those silver plates took possession of him. They were within easy reach. He had marked the cupboard in which they were kept. Yes, they were no mean prize. With the big ladle, they would easily bring at least two hundred francs, twice his nineteen years' saving!

Robbers and thieves are not born; most often they are made. Jean Valjean was born of a poor peasant family. He was of a thoughtful disposition, but not moody, which is characteristic of affectionate natures. He had lost his parents, when he was very young. He then had but one relative left, his sister, who was a widow and had eight children to support. This sister had brought up Jean Valjean and had taken care of him, as long as her husband lived. When he died, it was Jean Valjean's turn to be the supporter of the family and to take the father's place. He had reached his twenty-fifth year. His youth was spent in hard and heavy labour, which often brought him very little payment.

One year, when there was a severe winter Jean Valjean had no work. The family had no bread, and the children starved. Jean Valjean could hardly endure the harrowing sight

Nearby was a baker's shop, which he broke open The baker pursued and caught him, and produced him before the magistrate Jean Valjean was sentenced to five years' penal servitude in the galleys. A heavy chain was put round his hands and neck—all for his effort to feed the eight little, starving children. He was no longer Jean Valjean. He was No. 24601.

What became of the sister? What happened to the eight children? Who troubled himself about that? These poor creatures of God wandered the streets, without support or asylum, and lived as chance led.

Near the end of his fourth year of imprisonment, a year before his time, Jean Valjean made a bid for liberty. He escaped from prison, but was re-taken on the second day. His period of servitude was extended by three years: but his restless heart, which was full of affection for his sister's family, tempted him to escape from prison on three more occasions, all these attempts increased the period of his captivity to nineteen long years—all these, for taking a loaf of bread for eight starving children.

When he was released in 1815, Jean Valjean went out into the world, hardened and bitter. His soul had become sour and desperate. The once kind-hearted Jean Valjean had now become a morose convict He lapsed into moods that betrayed an unsteady and divided mind, a struggle between the best and the worst in him.

All these thoughts rushed through his mind that night. The clock chimed three He

opened his eyes, rose hastily in bed, felt for his knapsack, took something from it and sat still for a while. He remained, for some time, lost in thought, when the clock struck the half hour, he said to himself, "No use in delaying" He rose to his feet, hesitated for a moment longer and listened All was silent and still The moon shone full and bright, except for passing clouds. Jean Valjean went near the window which opened into the garden. Around the garden was a low wall, that could be easily scaled. Having studied his surroundings with the thoroughness of a thief, he went back to his bed, took his knapsack, put on his cap, felt for his stick and put it in the corner of the window; then, with muffled tread, he moved towards the door of the next room, where the Bishop slept peacefully. The door was unlatched.

Jean Valjean paused to listen. All was still. He pushed the door The door yielded, silently and gradually. When it had opened enough to let him pass through, Jean Valjean advanced, taking care not to knock against the furniture. At the end of the room, he heard the quiet breathing of the Bishop. Suddenly he stopped: he was near the bed, which he had reached sooner than he thought. He looked at the calm face of the sleeping Bishop It was just then lit up by the glorious moon, which was the only witness of Jean Valjean's silent activity. Ah! What a face! It was full of peace, hope and happiness. What radiance! On his forehead,

rested the indescribable reflection of an unseen light.

Jean Valjean could not remove his eyes from the venerable figure for a few minutes. The convict was hesitating between two ideas. The crucifix above the Bishop's mantel-piece was dimly visible. Jean Valjean stepped quickly forward, without looking at the Bishop, and went straight to the cupboard; the key had been left in the key-hole. He opened it and took out the basket of silver vessels. He then crossed the [illegible] quickly, reached the door, entered the [illegible], took his stick and stepped out; he put the silver into his knapsack and threw away the basket. Running across the garden, he leaped over the wall and disappeared.

The next morning, when the Bishop was walking in the garden, Madame Magloire came running to him in great excitement. "Monseigneur, the basket is missing, and the silver it contained." Just then the Bishop's glance fell on the basket which the convict had thrown away, the night before. "Here it is," he said, as he picked it up and gave it to Madame Magloire.

"But there is no silver in it!" cried Madame Magloire. "It must have been stolen. The man who came last night must have stolen it. Monseigneur, the man has disappeared."

For a moment, the Bishop was silent, looking down at the ground. Then raising his eyes, he said, "Madame Magloire, I have for a long time wrongfully kept this silver, which right-

fully belongs to the poor. The owner has now claimed it and taken it away with him"

"How can Monseigneur eat without silver plates?"

"Well," said the Bishop, "I can use wooden plates"

In a few minutes, the Bishop was seated at his breakfast at the same table at which he had dined He talked pleasantly to his sister, as if nothing serious had happened

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in," said the Bishop.

The door opened Three men, holding a fourth, appeared on the threshold The three men were policemen, the fourth was Jean Valjean Within a minute, a high police officer joined the group. He advanced towards the Bishop and saluted him in the fashion of a police officer.

The Bishop's attention was rivetted on the convict "I am glad you have come. Why did you leave the silver candlesticks which belong to you also?" he asked the convict. "They would bring you another two hundred francs," he quietly added.

The police officer was puzzled He felt he had arrested the man wrongly. 'Monseigneur, we must have arrested him by mistake We thought, from his appearance, that he could not be the owner of the silver he carried. Now, from what you say, we find we have been wrong," the officer explained.

"We will let him go," added the police officer.

"Most certainly, do," rejoined the good Bishop.

The policemen released the man and left the house

Jean Valjean's head was bent low in shame. But the Bishop went to the mantel-piece, took the two candlesticks and gave them to Jean Valjean, saying, "Friend, here are your candlesticks Take them"

The convict was trembling in every limb. He received the Bishop's gift in great confusion.

"Now," said the Bishop, "Go in peace. But when you next come to this house and leave it, you can always come in and go out, by the front door. You know it is only latched and can be easily opened"

Jean Valjean did not know what to say.

The Bishop went up to him, and said: "Friend, do not forget the promise you have made me that you will use this silver to become an honest man. Brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and give it to God"

Touched to the heart by the Bishop's trust in him, Jean Valjean ever after, believed in goodness, and made love the law of his life.

4 THE MAYOR

In 1815 the town of Montreuil was astir, because some unknown man had invented a process by which gum-lac could be substituted for resin and this process had revolutionised the manufacture of a number of articles, especially of bracelets. The new process reduced the price of the raw material, as well as the price of the finished product.

In less than three years, the inventor of this process had become enormously rich. He was a stranger to the place and nothing was known of his birth or early history He was known by the name of Father Madeleine. He was a man of about fifty and was good and kind. Within five years of his arrival, he became a popular leader of the people, and in 1820, they urged him, with one voice, to accept the office of Mayor of the City. Father Madeleine could not displease the citizens and willingly accepted the great honour bestowed upon him But even after he became Mayor, he remained as simple as he had always been He carried out his mayoral duties, but outside them, led a detached life. He loved to read books, and his leisure was utilised in study. In his walks, he carried a gun, though he seldom used it.

At the beginning of 1821, the journal, announced the decease of Monsieur Myriel, the great Bishop of Digne. Monsieur Madeleine, who happened to read the news, immediately put on his mourning suit., The people noticed it

and talked about it. They all concluded, that their Mayor must have been a close relation of the Bishop of Digne. Their respect for him increased a thousand-fold

Only one man in the city appeared to be indifferent to the greatness of the Mayor. Often, when Monsieur Madeleine passed along the street, followed by the benedictions of all, this man, who was tall and well-built, would turn round abruptly and follow him with his eyes, till he had disappeared. He wore a flat hat and an iron-grey coat, and carried a stout cane. His appearance was sombre and threatening. He was Javert, the Chief Inspector of the Police Department Few felt at ease in his presence.

One day as Monsieur Madeleine was walking along one of the alleys of the town, he heard a groan somewhere near. He went to the spot and found a large crowd. An old man had fallen under his cart and had been caught between the wheels. The whole weight of the cart rested on the old man, who was uttering pitiful groans. The crowd tried to pull him out, from between the wheels, but in vain. Javert, the Chief Inspector, who came up at that moment, sent for a jack. When the crowd turned and saw the Mayor, it fell back with respect The old man was crying for help. It had rained the night before; and as the road was muddy, the cart was sinking slowly. In less than five minutes, the old man would be crushed to death.

"We cannot wait for the jack," said the Mayor. "It will be too late. Now, I am

prepared to give a handsome reward to any one who will crawl in and lift the cart on his back. Come forward."

Javert laughed. "Monsieur, there is no one here strong enough for the job. But at Toulon, there is a convict who alone can do it." Attaching little importance to the Inspector's words, the Mayor repeated his announcement of a reward for help None came forward All of a sudden, to the great surprise of everyone, the Mayor, lying flat under the cart, began to lift it with his body The crowd cried out: "Father Madeleine, don't risk your life. Come out." But the Mayor still lay under the cart. Suspense and anxiety followed Immediately, all the members of the crowd set to work and in a minute, they had lifted the cart. The old man was saved

Madeleine arose His clothes were torn and covered with dirt and mud. The old man wept for gratitude and called him 'the good God.' The Mayor quickly looked at Javert, who stood dumbfounded. The crowd dispersed and everyone praised their great Mayor. The Mayor returned home, but his mind was crowded with memories.

A few days later, another incident took place. Javert had arrested a helpless lady named Fantine, the charge against her being, that she had insulted a citizen in public. The citizen was one of the young fops of the town, whom Javert was afraid of, because of his wealth and influence. The Mayor happened to know of

the case, and intervened on behalf of the woman.

"Inspector," said the Mayor in a calm tone, "Listen. You are an honest man and I can expect you to take a friendly suggestion I know the circumstances of this case. This lady is not in the wrong On the other hand, it is the man who preferred the complaint, who should be arrested"

"I am extremely sorry, Monsieur. This woman is guilty. My duty requires that this woman shall spend six months in prison," answered Javert.

"No; she shall not spend a day in prison. According to the criminal law of this land, I, the Mayor, am judge in the present case. I hereby order that this woman be set at liberty. Otherwise, you will be had up for wrongful confinement."

Javert bowed before the Mayor and went away.

The Mayor was all sympathy for Fantine. She had been living a precarious kind of life and had run into enormous debts. Her child, Cosette, a lovely girl, had been separated from her. This child was in another town, living with an inn-keeper and his wife, who kept her to serve them, for the money which Fantine owed them. The Mayor knew her circumstances and his sympathy for her was unbounded.

When Javert left, Monsieur Madeleine turned to Fantine and comforted her. "Do not lose heart, Fantine. I shall help you. I will pay your debts and will restore your child to you.

You shall live here, or at Paris, wherever you like. I will give you the money you need."

These words were like a glass of water to one dying of thirst. "To have my dear child, Cosette with me again! To be free from debts! To *live* again!" She gazed at the man who was speaking to her, as if she were demented. Then she burst into sobs. Her weak limbs gave way. Her head reeled and she fainted.

The Mayor at once understood the situation. He knew that Fantine had become almost mad, on account of the separation from her daughter, Cosette. After she had regained consciousness, the Mayor promised that he would restore Cosette to her. He then took leave of her.

But strange things happen, when they are least expected; and the Mayor found that he had made a promise to Fantine, which he could not fulfil, on account of an unexpected and strange incident.

5 THE ACCUSED APPEARS AFTER HIS TRIAL

Mayor Madeleine heard that a trial was to start at Arras, the following day. The Police, who had long been on the lookout for the noted convict, Jean Valjean, had at last succeeded in arresting him. The convict called himself Father Champmathieu and had so far evaded the Police very cleverly. But there could be no evading the Paris Police forever. It was Javert, who informed the Mayor of the trial.

The Mayor seemed interested in the case. It was not the curious interest of a sensation-lover, but something much more. In fact, the Mayor spent a restless night Something disturbed him. A great battle was raging between two conflicting thoughts in his mind. He continued to question himself. He sternly asked himself, what he understood by the words: "My object has been attained" He declared that his life, in truth, did have an object. But what object? To conceal his name? To deceive the police? Was it for so mean an aim that he had done, all that he had done? On the contrary, to deliver himself up, to save this man overtaken by so ghastly a mistake, to reassume his name, once again to become the convict Jean Valjean—*that* was really to achieve his resurrection, and to close for ever the hell from whence he had emerged! To fall back into it, in appearance, was to emerge from it in reality! He *must* do it! All he had done was nothing, if he did not take that step! All his life would be useless, all his suffering would have been in vain. He had only to ask the question: 'What is the use?' He felt that the Bishop was with him, that the Bishop was present all the more that he was dead, that the Bishop was looking fixedly at him, that henceforth, Mayor Madeleine with all his virtues would be abominable to him, and the galley slave, Jean Valjean, would be adorable and pure in his sight. He knew that men saw his mask, but, that the Bishop saw his face; that men saw his life, but that the Bishop

saw his conscience. He must then go to Arras, deliver the wrong Jean Valjean, denounce the right one. Alas! that was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the final step to be taken, but he must do it. Mournful destiny! He could only enter into sanctity in the eyes of God, by returning into infamy in the eyes of men!

The next morning, he engaged a carriage to go to Arras and drove to that city By the time he arrived, the trial was almost over The trying Judge was about to sum up the case and deliver Judgement The Mayor went into the court and by the courtesy of the judge, was given a seat very near the judge. The judge put a last question to the accused: "Have you anything to add to your defence?" The man, twirling in his hands, a hideous cap, did not seem to hear the judge. The judge put the question again; the accused stammered out an answer. The judge asked the Prosecuting Attorney to produce witnesses, who could identify the accused as Jean Valjean. Three witnesses came forward All three swore, that they recognized in him, their former fellow-prisoner, Jean Valjean.

A buzz of excitement ran through the crowd and almost infected the jury. It was evident, that the accused would be sentenced severely.

"Officers," said the judge, "enforce order; I am now going to sum up the case."

Just as the judge had said this, some

disturbance near the judge was noticed. A voice was heard exclaiming · "Blind witnesses, look this way" The voice was pathetic Those who heard it, felt their blood run cold. All eyes turned to the spot whence it came. The three witnesses who had been addressed by that voice, turned to look behind The Judge was puzzled and angry, that one of the spectators should interfere, just as he was about to sum up the case. He looked at the person who had spoken. It was none other than Monsieur Madeleine, the distinguished Mayor of Montreuil

All faces were turned to the Mayor.

Yes, there was no doubt that it was the Mayor who had shouted out that remark. Yet, there was nothing unusual about him.He held his hat in his hand; his overcoat was carefully buttoned. But he was very pale and trembled slightly.

Yes, it was the Mayor. He stood up and went straight into the witness-box; turning to the three witnesses, who had given evidence in the case, he asked them, "Do you recognize me?"

All three stood confounded But they indicated by a shake of their heads, that they did not know him. Monsieur Madeleine turned to the jurors and the Court, and said in a mild voice, "Gentlemen of the Jury, release the accused. Your Honour, order my arrest. He is not the man you should sentence. It is I. I am Jean Valjean."

Not a man stirred. The whole court was as silent as the grave, for a few moments. The Judge was sad and distressed. He looked at the

Prosecuting Attorney Then, breaking the silence, he asked the spectators in a low tone: "Is there a doctor here?"

The Mayor would not allow the Judge to talk. He continued. "You think, I require medical aid. I am quite sane. But you cannot accuse another person of my guilt and sentence him. I am an unhappy convict What a pity, that in this place, a place where true justice is supposed to prevail, I should be the only one to see clearly and to speak the truth! I disguised myself under my present name. I became rich; I was made Mayor There are many more things I cannot say now. But some day, I shall tell you my full story."

The Judge turned to the Attorney and said seriously, 'Monsieur Madeleine has become mad. That is because he is too kind and makes others' sorrows his sorrows. He has too much pity for the accused."

The Mayor protested:

"You say, 'Monsieur Madeleine has gone mad.' You will not believe me. Forget, that I am the Mayor: know, if you care for justice, that I am a self-confessing accused. Do not condemn that man . . . . Ah, how I wish the alert Javert were here!"

But the Judge and the jurors would not take these words in any other sense, than as the manifestation of madness.

The Mayor immediately turned to each of the witnesses and recalled some of the experiences, which they had shared in common, in prison.

The witnesses agreed with him fully Calling one of the witnesses by name, the Mayor said, "On your left arm, a date in blue letters has been burnt into the skin, a date of great importance, 1st March, 1815 Lift up your sleeve and show it to the others."

The witness pulled up his sleeve All eyes gazed at the arm The date was clearly seen

"Now you see," said the Mayor, "that I am Jean Valjean"

The countenance of the Judge changed, for it was not clear to him, how he should proceed further in the trial At that point, the Mayor surrendered himself to the Attorney, saying, "Monsieur, I am now at your disposal"

In a few minutes, the former accused in the case had been set at liberty. He went away stupefied, under the impression, that it was the insanity of the Mayor that had won him his providential release.

The Prosecuting Attorney could do nothing with the Mayor. The Mayor said, "I am leaving, since no one has put me under arrest. But when the time comes, I can be easily arrested. Everyone knows where I live."

He went out. No one stopped him. The reverence that the people had for him, all these years, had not waned The crowd made way for him and greeted him as "Monsieur Mayor."

The Mayor returned to Montreuil, where the first person he visited was Fantine, who was in hospital. She talked and raved of Cosette and nothing else. The Mayor saw her. She

was dying "Good God!" he exclaimed "What is the matter, Fantine? How are you?" She could not answer. She touched him with her right hand and with the left, made a sign to look behind He turned at once and saw Inspector Javert standing behind him. The Mayor turned to Fantine saying, "Fantine, do not be afraid. The Inspector has not come for you Be composed"

Javert came towards the Mayor and said, "Get ready." Fantine could hardly understand anything She was nearer the other world than this She saw the Inspector making so bold as to touch the great Mayor of Montreuil and even to push him out of the room. In her extreme weakness, she cried out, "Monsieur Mayor."

"Don't talk There is no Mayor here This fellow whom I have seized, is a convict called Jean Valjean, long wanted by the police. I have now got him," cried Javert. But Jean Valjean felt, that a part of his mission was still incomplete. He had not brought Cosette to Fantine. He pleaded with Javert for three days' parole. Javert was not the man to miss an opportunity of taking revenge, and he bluntly refused the Mayor's request

The sight of the arrest of the Mayor was too much for the feeble Fantine to bear She tried to sit up, she looked at the Mayor, now under arrest as Jean Valjean, the notorious brigand, and then at Javert, the intolerant police official She wanted to say something But her head struck against the top of the bed,

and she fell forward on her breast All was over with her, in half a second Tears rolled down Jean Valjean's cheeks He told the Inspector, " You have killed this woman."

" Be quiet. You cannot hereafter preach sermons, Monsieur Brigand and Ex-Mayor. The guard is downstairs, come along now, without hand-cuffs."

Fantine's hand hung over the side of the bed. Jean Valjean knelt before it, lifted it, and kissed it. Then he rose and spoke to the Inspector " Monsieur, I am ready. Take me to prison."

Javert took him to the city prison and put him behind bars.

6. JEAN VALJEAN'S " DAUGHTER "

Escape from prison, or from custody, was always child's play for Jean Valjean. That very night, the convict broke one of the window-bars and jumped from the roof, thus escaping from custody. He met his old servant, arranged for the funeral of Fantine and went in the direction of Paris

On learning of Jean Valjean's escape, Javert went post-haste to Paris, for he knew that the former Mayor of Montrevil would try to conceal himself, in that large city. As you may have guessed, Jean Valjean fell into the Inspector's hands and was once again a prisoner. He was employed for sometime, as a convict-labourer in a ship.

Ere long, however, a strange event happened, which helped him to escape again. By accident, one of the sailors of the ship fell into the sea. None of the crew in the ship was bold enough to jump into the sea, to rescue him. Jean Valjean volunteered to run the risk, provided his chains were removed. As soon as his shackles were removed, Jean Valjean jumped into the sea, to save the drowning man. He climbed to the deck with the man he had saved, and, in a minute, put the sailor among his mates. But he did not stop there. While the others were applauding his heroism, he jumped into the sea again. What happened to him, no one in the ship knew His mates took him for dead The newspapers, too, announced his death as follows :

> *"November, 17, 1823. Yesterday, a convict on board the ship Orion, after rescuing a sailor, fell into the sea and was drowned. This man was registered by the number 9430 and bore the name, Jean Valjean."*

But Jean Valjean was very much alive. After his dive into the sea, he swam ashore and walked to Paris. His first business in the city, was to go to the place where Cosette was living. He set out for Montfermeil where Cosette was serving as a servant, under an innkeeper, called Thenardier. He went to the inn and paid fifteen hundred francs for the release of Cosette. Then he took the young girl to his own room.

Till then, Jean Valjean had never had anything of his own. Since leaving his home, he

had been quite alone in the world. He had never been a father, lover, husband or friend. When he saw Cosette, his heart was moved. He was seized with a feeling of attachment for that lovely little thing, whom he had rescued from the cruel inn-keeper. Cosette was, to him, a source of supreme bliss. If the Bishop had caused goodness to rise on his horizon, this young girl evoked the dawn of love in him. He loved her like a father. He found joy and comfort in her company. He taught her to read and write. Teaching her, watching her innocent pranks, took up nearly all Jean Valjean's time. Cosette called him 'father', and believed that he was her father.

One day, as Jean Valjean was walking along a street with Cosette, he saw a beggar sitting on the ground, praying. His face was bent low Jean Valjean put a piece of money into his hand. The beggar lifted his head for a second and dropped it again. Jean Valjean's face became pale It was not a beggar, but his sworn enemy. It was Javert himself! Jean Valjean hurried home, anxious and ill at ease

There was no doubt, that Javert was on his track once again. Fearing that the Police Chief would arrest him again, he planned to leave the place with Cosette He did not say anything to the girl, but took her away from his house. The full moon was just appearing, as they left, and Jean Valjean kept looking back, many times, to see if they were being followed. Cosette, who had become familiar with the peculiarities of

her "father", noticed him but did not say a word They walked for several hours, threading all the streets in the locality As they drew near the Police Station, the convict realised that they were being pursued. Jean Valjean recognized one of his pursuers as Javert. He made up his mind to escape. Taking Cosette in his arms, he fled. The men, three in number, were at his heels in no time, for about a quarter of an hour, the pursuers and the pursued dashed through the deserted streets of the city. At last, Jean Valjean managed to escape from their sight. He ran up a narrow pathway unobserved by the police. Javert was at his wits' end In a few minutes, he became so confused, that he was not quite sure in which direction the long-sought-for convict had disappeared. All the same, he posted a guard at the beginning of the alley and went back to his Headquarters.

Jean Valjean soon found himself before a high wall, which made further progress impossible. If he turned back, there was the policeman on duty. Fortunately, he had become a master in the art of raising himself by mere muscular strength, thanks to his many escapes from the galleys of Toulon. He now measured the height of the wall with his eyes and calculated, that it must be about eighteen feet high. He could easily scale such a height. The problem was, Cosette. Cosette did not know how to scale a wall. He would rather surrender to the police, than abandon the sweet, little girl. But how could he jump over a wall with her?

Valjean's gaze fell upon a lamp-post nearby. There was a rope hanging from the top of the post. This rope was intended to bring down the lamp, or take it up, by means of a pulley. The lamp was not there, because on full-moon nights, lamps were not lit Jean Valjean decided to use this rope. He bound a cloth around Cosette's waist, and attached it to one of the ends of the rope. He took the other end of the rope in his teeth, threw his shoes and stockings over the wall, climbed upon the pile of masonry and raised himself in the angle of the wall. In half a minute, he was at the top of the wall Then, he drew Cosette up. He put her on his back, took her little hands in his left hand, and crawled along, till he reached a lime-tree; from the tree, which was not very high, he jumped to the ground, on the other side of the wall. Throughout this strategic move, the girl did not even utter a whisper.

Jean Valjean was now in the garden of a Convent. A few minutes after he had jumped into it, a man appeared. "A hundred francs, if you will give me lodging," said Jean Valjean to the man. The man looked at Jean Valjean closely and was startled. "Is it Monsieur Madeleine?" he asked.

Jean Valjean was taken aback.

"How did you come here, Monsieur Mayor? What has happened to you? Where are your Mayor's robes?" the man went on.

"Who are you?" asked Jean Valjean.

"Don't you remember me? I am Fauche-



He now measured the height of the wall with his eyes... (p 31)

levent. You saved my life, when I was about to be crushed under a cart in Montreuil"

"Oh, did I? Yes, I remember" Jean Valjean recalled how he had saved this man from being crushed under his cart

"What is this place?" asked Jean Valjean.

"This is the Convent of the *Petit Picpus*"

"Father Fauchelevent, I saved your life once Now it is your turn to do me a favour. Can you give me and this child lodging?"

"I can take you into my shanty now. But I cannot promise to keep you for any length of time. If your presence were to be known to the authorities of the Convent, I should lose my post I am, after all, only an underling here—a gardener."

So Jean Valjean and Cosette spent the night in the gardener's shed.

Next morning, both the host and the guest woke up early and discussed plans. The gardener said, that it was not safe for the convict and his child, to remain in the Convent. The rules strictly prohibited the entry of men into it

"Moreover," said Fauchelevent, "you have arrived at a bad time. One of the nuns is very sick—in fact, she is dying"

Suddenly they heard the tolling of the Convent bell.

"The nun is dead That is the death-knell. It will sound every minute, for twenty-four hours, until the body is taken out of the church," added the gardener.

The problem for Jean Valjean now, was to

leave the convent, unnoticed by the nuns The gardener too was worried about it

"Monsieur Madeleine," (he continued to address Jean Valjean by that name) "I suggest, that as it is not safe for you to go out by the main entrance, you can leave the way you came in By the way, how did you come in?"

Jean Valjean's face grew pale The idea of climbing down again, into that formidable street made him shudder He imagined that the police were still patrolling that area, and that Javert was watching for him

"Father Fauchelevent, I myself forget how I came in What does it matter? Take it, that I fell from on high"

"Well, I don't disbelieve it," said the gardener The gardener's thoughts turned to the little Cosette. "Your little one is asleep She is sweet What is her name?"

"Cosette."

"Your child, I suppose? That is to say, you are her grandfather"

"Yes."

"It will be easy for her to get out The door of my shanty opens into the court I can put her into my big basket and carry her out I shall leave her with an old friend He will keep her till tomorrow. You can then take her with you. But how will *you* get out?"

Jean Valjean gave no reply, but shook his head.

Just then a bell rang in a peculiar way. "This time, it sounds for me. The Mother

Prioress wants me. I shall come back. Please be careful" Saying this, the gardener went to the parlour.

The Prioress was waiting for the gardener The gardener bowed and stopped at the threshold. The Prioress said, "I want to tell you something important."

"And I, for my part have something to represent to the Most Reverend Mother," said the old man rather boldly.

"What is your petition?" asked the Prioress

"Most Reverend Mother, I am growing older and weaker. The work to be done at the garden is not little. I have a brother. If Reverend Mother approves, my brother can come and stay with me, and help me He is an excellent gardener My brother has a little girl, who can be taken into the Convent."

The Prioress heard his petition to the end. Then she spoke :

"Can you procure a strong iron-bar before the night? It is to be used as a lever You know that a mother died this morning she was Mother Crucifixion Her last wish was, that she should be buried in the Chapel Do you understand?"

"But, Mother, is it not forbidden?" asked the man.

"Forbidden by men, but not by God," replied the Prioress

Then she continued. "We have confidence in you. Mother Crucifixion will have to be buried in her coffin, under our altar. The right of the

Convent to burial cannot be disputed by anybody We live in times of terrible confusion. People are ignorant of what they ought to know, and know those things, of which they ought to be ignorant. They are gross and impious Despite the laws, we will do as we please with our dead. This will be done about three quarters of an hour before midnight, do not forget"

"No, Mother I will do everything to show my zeal for the community First, I nail the coffin Then I open the vault, (I have a lever) and when the burial is over, close it again. The Government will suspect nothing Is that all?"

"No," replied the Prioress "There is still the empty coffin"

"Reverend Mother, I will fill it up with earth and take it to the cemetery I will cover the coffin with the pall. *That* will be the burial for the public But the real burial takes place here."

The face of the Prioress, which till then was anxious and worried, became restful once more

"I am satisfied now, Father Fauchelevent," said the Prioress. "You may bring your brother to me after the burial and tell him, to bring us his daughter."

7. THE COFFIN WITH A LIVING BODY

The gardener returned to the solitary shanty, where he found Jean Valjean telling Cosette about their plan to escape. "Listen, my little one. We must go away from this house, but we shall come back, and then we shall be very well off here The good man here, will carry you out in a basket, on his back You will wait for me at his friend's house. I shall come and fetch you. Above all, obey him and say nothing."

Cosette nodded her head, with a serious look.

"Have you made any arrangements?" asked Jean Valjean anxiously, looking at the gardener.

"I have permission to bring you in to-morrow. But it is necessary for you to *get out* first That is another difficulty The dead nun will be buried in the convent. But I have to carry the empty coffin filled with earth, to the cemetery Now, how am I, to make earth look like a body? If I carry out everything, without a mistake, I am to be permitted to take you in, with Cosette"

"What is this empty coffin you speak of?" asked Jean Valjean

It is the coffin that will be sent by the government The government sends a coffin, whenever a person dies, to have the dead body buried in the public cemetery My fear is, that if it should be taken away empty, the government might discover it, because, as it will be light, it will rattle," replied the gardener.

"Why not put a body into it?"

"A dead body? I have none."

"What about a living body?"

"Whose living body?"

"*Mm?*," said Jean Valjean "You see, that plan would help me to get out of this compound easily."

Fauchelevent sprang to his feet "You?"

"Yes Why not? Where is the coffin?"

"Down in the dead-room"

"Now, what do you say to my idea?"

"Yes It seems to be the only way"

"Till night-fall, unnoticed by any one, I shall remain hidden in your tool-shed You can come and nail me up, in the coffin, at two o'clock But what troubles me is, how I shall get out of it, in the cemetery There will be a grave-digger, there, won't there?" inquired Jean Valjean

"That will not embarrass me I can send him away, on some pretext or other I know him well enough for that"

"Then don't worry, Father Everything will turn out as we wish"

The next day, as the sun was declining, passers-by on the roads took off their hats, as an old-fashioned hearse passed by. The coffin was covered with a white cloth, upon which was displayed a large, black cross. The procession, not attended by many, wended its way to the cemetery

The burial of Mother Crucifixion in the vault under the altar, the departure of Cosette, the introduction of Jean Valjean into the dead-

room—all these had been carried out, according to plan. The most important part of the plan remained to be carried out, in the grave-yard.

Suddenly the hearse stopped. It had reached the gate of the cemetery. Fauchelevent had some difficulty here, because there was a new grave-digger, the old one having died sometime ago. However, after a short talk, the gardener made friends with the new man, and the hearse was allowed to go into the cemetery. Then followed, one by one, the usual items associated with a burial. Jean Valjean listened to all the phases of the fearful drama, from inside the coffin. At last, the coffin was lowered into the grave. Then the priest said the last prayers for the soul of the deceased. Holy water was also sprinkled on the grave, and the man inside the coffin began to feel the damp. "But it will be finished soon. The priest will go away. Fauchelevent will take the grave-digger away from here. I shall be left alone. Afterwards, Fauchelevent will come back and help me to get out." These were Jean Valjean's thoughts, as he listened to what was happening above him.

"*Requiescat in pace*." "*Amen*." Jean Valjean heard these words. Then, the priest was gone.

Jean Valjean waited for the grave-digger, also, to leave. All at once, he heard a sound above his head, which seemed to him like a clap of thunder. It was a spadeful of earth falling on the coffin. A second spadeful of earth followed. One of the holes by which Jean Valjean breathed in air was closed by the earth. Then a third

and a fourth spadeful of earth descended. It was more than the strongest man could bear Jean Valjean lost consciousness.

The priest and the choir had left, and there remained in the cemetery, only Father Fauchelevent and the grave-digger Being new, the grave-digger seemed rather enthusiastic about his job, and that was why earth had been shovelled into the grave, over the coffin. Fauchelevent stealthily took away the grave-digger's licence from his pocket and hid it. Then he asked him, "Friend, you are new to this job I have not met you in the cemetery before Where is your licence?"

The grave-digger felt in his pocket

"Oh dear! I have forgotten to bring it," the grave-digger said, his face pale The punishment for not having a licence while on duty, was fifteen francs To a grave-digger, fifteen francs was a fortune He immediately dropped his spade

"Don't be nervous You can get home and bring the card Then, you can bury the dead man. I will stay here and watch him, while you are gone, to see that he does not run away," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger ran home. Fauchelevent waited for the sound of his footsteps to die away, and then bending over the grave, called out in a low voice, "Father Madeleine"

There was no reply. The gardener shuddered. Immediately, he took his chisel and hammer and removed the top board of the coffin. Jean

Valjean's face was visible in the twilight, but his body was motionless. Fauchelevent was at his wits' end. Jean Valjean's 'death' was now no longer a pretence. What could the gardener do? What would Cosette do? All these thoughts battered the mind of the old gardener

Suddenly, the 'dead man' turned in his grave. Jean Valjean who had been lying unconscious those last few minutes, came back to his senses, as he breathed in the cold fresh air. "I was falling asleep I am cold," he said, as he sat up in the coffin The fresh air had revived him

Fauchelevent said, "Let us get away from here at once."

Jean Valjean was out of the grave in a minute. Then, Fauchelevent took the spade, and Jean Valjean, the pick; together they buried the empty coffin. Hurriedly, they left the cemetery. They did not worry about the grave-digger's return They went out by the road which the hearse had taken. Asking Jean Valjean to go to his friend's house and wait for him there with Cosette, Fauchelevent went to the grave-digger's house, and found the poor man desperately searching for his card.

"I have brought you your spade and pick," said Fauchelevent, as he entered

"What! Is it you, peasant? I am still searching for my card," said the grave-digger.

"Don't worry. I found it near the gate of the cemetery. It must have fallen out of your pocket. I have dropped it into the box, near the

gate-keeper's seat. You can take it to-morrow. As for the burial, I did it myself, though it was your job. Be careful hereafter. Don't drop your card again, so carelessly," Fauchelevent said, in a tone of one that can take some liberty.

"Thanks, villager," exclaimed the grave-digger, "A thousand thanks for helping me."

It was not yet very late in the night. Fauchelevent, Jean Valjean and Cosette went to the Convent, to see the Prioress The porter who had instructions, opened the side door and admitted the three of them. They went straight to the inner parlour, where they were to meet the Prioress, who was anxiously waiting for them As soon as the three persons presented themselves to her, she first scrutinised Jean Valjean, and then Cosette After pausing for a minute, she said to Fauchelevent, "Father, your brother may stay This little girl will be helpful." Then the Prioress took Cosette into her Convent and made her a charity-pupil

The next day, Jean Valjean became assistant gardener at the Convent He felt very safe inside its walls His Cosette would have a free education. He would be free from the molestation of the police. Thus, a very pleasant life began for him. He worked every day in the garden and made himself very useful. Cosette was allowed to spend an hour, with him, every day.

Jean Valjean's happiest days were passed at the Convent. Everything around him—the quiet garden, the bright flowers, the children shouting with joy, the meek and simple women—all these entered into his being, and little by little, he became a good soul. His whole heart melted in gratitude, to those who had helped him at the most critical turn in his life.

A few years passed thus. Cosette had now grown into a young girl.

8 A LOVER FOR LITTLE COSETTE

During the days of the French Revolution, there was a soldier in Napoleon's army, named M. Pontmercy. He had fought gallantly for the great Conqueror and distinguished himself in various campaigns Napoleon made him a baron, in recognition of his meritorious services At the famous battle of Waterloo, M. Pontmercy had been seriously wounded and had come very near to dying. It happened, that a camp-thief prowling about, looking for things he could plunder, examined each corpse very closely. While he was thus employed, he felt as if someone had touched his leg.

"Oh, it must be some dead fellow," he said to himself. But he was curious to know, how a dead man's hand could touch him. He bent down and seized the hand, that had touched him. The whole body was not visible, as corpses were piled on it So he extricated the body and dragged it to a side of the road. It appeared to

be the body of an officer of rank, for the Silver Cross of the *Legion of Honour* was pinned to his coat. The thief searched the officer's pockets and found a watch and a purse, both of which he took. While he was about his job, he turned the body from side to side, and the officer opened his eyes. He was not dead. He was only weak from loss of blood.

"Thanks," he said feebly. "Who has won, Monsieur?"

"The English," said the prowler.

"You will find in my pocket, a purse and a watch. You may take them, for you have saved my life," said the officer. This had already been done. But just to satisfy the officer, the thief made a pretence of searching his pockets. "I can find nothing, Monsieur," he said.

"Then some thief must have stolen them. I am sorry, I have nothing to give you. You have given me my life. But I won't forget your deed. May I know who you are?"

The thief replied, quick and low, "I am a French soldier."

"What is your rank?"

"Sergeant."

"Your name?" asked the officer.

"Thenardier."

"I shall remember you for ever, Sergeant. If you would care to know it, my name is Pontmercy."

His work done, the thief went away.

The officer soon got well. His only son, Marius, was brought up by his father-in-law.

The boy was not allowed to see his father, because the latter was a supporter of the Republic, whilst the father-in-law supported the monarchy. For eighteen years, Marius lived under the care of his grand-father One day, a letter arrived to say that Pontmercy was seriously ill Marius started out to see his dying father, but was too late He could only see his father's dead body. He had been separated from him, almost from birth, and this was the first and last time, he saw him He was not moved by the sight of his dead father, because he had never really known him

Pontmercy left no property His servant handed to Marius, only a scrap of paper saying, "Your father gave this to you." The paper contained the following —

"My dear son—The Emperor made me a baron upon the battle-field of Waterloo At that battle, a Sergeant, by name Thenardier, saved my life. I think, I have seen him keeping a little tavern in a village near Paris—at Chelles or Montfermeil. If you meet him, give him all the help you can"

Marius kept the letter After his father's funeral, he returned to Paris, where he was studying law. After he went back, he thought no more of his father, but lived with his grand-father.

Marius could forget his father; but those who knew Pontmercy, praised his gallantry and patriotic fervour. Soon, a time came, when Marius, too, realized the greatness of his father. He was full of regret and remorse, that he had

not appreciated it earlier. He wondered, in despair, how he could say all that was in his soul, to his father's tomb Oh! if his father were alive, how he would have cried to him, "Father, enlighten your son" Gleams of truth came to him at every moment His grandfather had taught him about the blessings of monarchy But only now, did he understand, why his father had loved the Republic The services of Napoleon to France were noble, and it was nothing but prejudice, that had made his grandfather condemn the Napoleonic regime. Marius, who had, for a long time, believed all that his grandfather had told him of the Emperor, now saw clearly, that he had been tutored in the wrong way. From the moment when revelation came to him, Marius searched files of newspapers, for his father's record, and was convinced that his father's support to the Republic, was what every intelligent man would have given. Thus, Marius, brought up by the staunchest supporter of monarchy, became the strongest supporter of the Republic.

Marius' grandfather watched him Though he knew that the young man was greatly agitated, he did not ask him the cause of his agitation One day, grandfather and grandson were engaged in a discussion. At one stage, the discussion became heated. The grandfather had been under the impression, that Marius had forgotten his father completely, he was startled, when Marius waxed eloquent in praise of his father.

"My father," said Marius, "was a humble and heroic man, who served the Republic and France gloriously, and was great in the greatest history that men ever made Such a man—a mighty soul—is dead, forgotten and abandoned! His only fault was, that he loved his country"

This was more than the grand-father could stand At the word *Republic*, the old man sprang to his feet. Every one of the words which Marius had pronounced, produced a striking effect on the old royalist's face

"Marius," he cried, "I don't know what your father was! I don't want to know I know nothing about him But one thing, I do know All the fellows that swore by the Republic—well—they were beggars, assassins, thieves—I say *all* Look here, you are as much a baron as my slipper They were all bandits who served Bonaparte, traitors, who betrayed their legitimate king, cowards, who ran from the English at Waterloo If your father was among them, I don't know him I am sorry for it."

Marius could not allow such things to be said But what could he do? His father's reputation had been trodden under foot by his grand-father. It was impossible not to avenge his father. For a few minutes, he was dizzy—then he cried in a frenzied voice, "*Down with the Bourbons!*"

The old man's face became whiter than his hair. He bent his head and spoke somewhat calmly. "A baron like Monsieur Marius, and a poor man like me, cannot remain under the same

roof." Then in a terribly angry voice, he cried, "Be off"

Marius left the house

That was how grand-father and grandson separated.

After leaving his home, Marius took a room in a wretched house. He paid no attention to the family, that lived in the other portion of the house He devoted himself entirely to law. Whenever he felt dejected, he would go out for a walk and a breath of fresh air

For more than a year, Marius had noticed that, every day, in a retired walk of the Luxembourg, an old man and a young girl sat side by side. They appeared to be father and daughter The man might be sixty The old man was known to many, as M Leblanc, because of his white hair. It was not possible to say anything about his status, for he wore no very decent dress. The girl looked about thirteen or fourteen. She wore the dress of a Convent school-girl.

Marius felt a peculiar kind of affection for the girl stealing into his heart. For one year, he had met her almost daily, and he found that his love increased with the days. The girl, too, seemed to look at him with interest, but whether it showed her love or curiosity, Marius could hardly judge.

The following year, Marius gave up his habit of regular walks in the Luxembourg. However, one day, he went out deeply absorbed in thought and found the two in the same spot. He had not seen the father and daughter, for many

months. He was now charmed with her—her manners appeared refined, and she had all the comeliness which a girl attains, when she reaches the age of *sweet fifteen*. At first, Marius thought it was an elder daughter of the same man. But when he looked at the girl attentively, he recognized her as the same girl he had seen before. What a change! In six months, the little girl had become a charming young maiden!

The way Marius looked at them, his more than ordinary interest in coming to the garden, just when they were there, all these roused the suspicion of Jean Valjean. "Perhaps, I am being pursued. It is not safe to go out for a walk to the Luxembourg," he thought. He not only stopped going to the Luxembourg, but also shifted to another house, fearing that his lodging might have been spotted already.

Marius could no longer meet his angel. He wanted to know, who she was and more about her. But she had left abruptly. "What is her name? Where is she staying?" Marius wanted to satisfy his curiosity. But who could give him the answers?

In one of his walks, he had picked up a handkerchief, from the spot near which the girl had sat. He wondered if the handkerchief could give him a clue. He examined it thoroughly. In one corner, he noticed the letters "U. F." "U. F.?" What could they mean? He could not make it out. He thought that U might stand for Ursula, because that was the

girl's name, he knew, beginning with the rather uncommon letter U

"Where is Ursula staying? When can I meet her? Would that I come across her this evening!" These were the thoughts that passed through Marius' mind.

9 LES MISERABLES

Marius continued to live in the old tenement. He paid no attention to anybody else in the building. At this time, there were no occupants in the house, except himself and the family of the Jondrettes, whose antecedents were shrouded in mystery.

One day, Marius heard a rap at his door. "Come in," he said.

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur..... ."

It was a hollow, coarse voice, like the voice of an old man, spoilt by the effect of liquor. Marius turned quickly, and saw a young girl of sixteen. He arose and gazed with astonishment, upon this being A remnant of beauty could still be seen upon her young face, like the pale sun, hidden by dark clouds, at the dawn of a winter's day. The face was not absolutely unfamiliar to him

"What do you want, Mademoiselle?" he asked.

The young girl delivered a letter to him. "Monsieur Marius, my father sends you this letter," she explained.

She had called him by his name. How did

she know it? She appeared the very embodiment of wretchedness and poverty. Marius opened the letter and read.

"My dear neighbour,

I have learned of your kindness towards me. My people tell me, that you once paid the rent for us. That was very good of you, young man. My eldest daughter will tell you, that we have been without a morsel of food, these two days. My wife is very ill. I hope your generous heart will soften at this appeal, and that you will deign to send me some small gift.

JONDRETTE."

"P.S.—My daughter will await your orders, dear Monsieur, Marius."

The letter was from his co-tenant, Jondrette. He had never met him. In fact, he had not even seen him often. He now saw everything clearly. The occupation of this neighbour in his distress, was to work upon the sympathies of benevolent people. To succeed in his job, he sent his daughters on his errands. Marius judged from the letter and from the general flutter in the family, that they had been carrying on a sort of precarious existence so far. Perhaps, these people were also carrying on some of the secret trades of darkness.

In the meantime, the girl was walking to and fro, with the boldness of a spectre. She stopped suddenly, took a piece of paper and wrote, "*The Police are here, quick!*" and gave it to Marius. Marius did not understand her. Evidently, it was meant to express the urgency of her demand. He did not want to detain her

unnecessarily He gave her five francs saying, "Give this money to your father" She took the money eagerly

"Good," said she, "there is some sunshine."

She made a deep bow to Marius, then waved her hand to him and moved towards the door, saying, "Good morning." Then she went out.

Marius took up the slip containing the words, "The police are here, quick!" and put it into a tray on his table

The room in which Marius lived was only an apology The whole house looked haunted The presence of the Jondrettes added to the foul atmosphere of the place. They appeared to him, to be depraved, corrupt and vile He was sorry, he had to live there and have them for his neighbours A wretched life! What about his own room? It was very old and shabby in appearance. There were holes everywhere The wall was a thin layer of plaster, held up by laths and joists There was hole near the ceiling, shaped like a triangle, through which one could peep into the portion occupied by the Jondrettes To do this, one had only to climb the bureau Marius could look at misfortune through the hole.

"Let me see what these people are like," thought Marius, "and to what they have been reduced" He climbed up the bureau, put his eye to the opening and looked in What Marius saw, was a small den, abject, filthy, gloomy and unclean. The only furniture was a straw chair,

a rickety table, a few broken, old dishes. The light came from an only window, with four panes Spiders' webs were the window-curtains. Just enough light came in, to make a man's face appear like the face of a phantom Obscene pictures hung upon the walls

Seated at the table, was a man of about sixty, small, thin, haggard, with a keen, cruel, and restless look He had a long grey beard. He was dressed in a woman's chemise, which showed his shaggy chest, and his naked arms, bristling with grey hairs. He was smoking a pipe There was more tobacco than bread, in that den. The old man was writing something on a sheet of paper

A well-built woman, about forty years old, was seated near the fireplace. She seemed a giantess beside her husband She had hideous light red hair, sprinkled with grey, which she pushed back from time to time, with her huge, shining hands, which had flat nails Upon one of the pallets, on the floor, sat a little pale girl, doubtless the younger sister of the one who had just come to his room. Nothing showed that any useful work was done in this room.

Marius had seen enough. With a heavy heart, he was about to get down, when a sound attracted his attention So he continued to look through the opening. The eldest daughter of the family had just come in. When she came near Jondrette, she cried with an expression of triumph : " He has agreed to come."

The father turned his eyes to look at her.

the woman turned her head, the younger sister did not stir

"Who?" asked the father

"That man I met him at the church and gave him the letter. He read it and said, 'Where do you live, my child?' I said, 'Monsieur, I will show you' He said 'No, dear child, leave your address My daughter has some purchases to make I must help her' So, I gave him the address"

"How do you know that he will come?"

"As I was coming along, I looked back. The man was coming in a carriage Evidently, towards our place I ran home, to reach here first and tell you about it Perhaps he is outside already"

"Wife," cried the old man "Here is the philanthropist The man has come. Put out the fire." The astounded wife did not move.

Then the old man, with the agility of a mountebank, caught up a broken pot and threw some water on the fire. He seized a chair and with a kick, ruined its seat He turned towards his younger daughter, and said, "Quick! Break a pane of glass."

The child, as if tutored previously, rose on tip-toe, broke a pane, and, in that hurried operation, tore her fist, which bled.

"Dear, what is it you want to do?" asked the wife

"Get into bed," answered the husband. The wife obeyed and threw herself heavily, upon one of the pallets.

The old man looked around, as if to assure himself, that he had forgotten nothing Then rising, he said, "We can now receive our guest"

At that moment, there was a light rap on the door, the man rushed forward and opened it, crying out words of welcome, "Come in, Monsieur, come in, my noble benefactor, with your charming young lady"

A man of mature age and a young girl appeared in the door- way Marius' interest in the affairs of the Jondrettes increased. Who were the visitors to the Jondrettes? Yes, the old man he had often met in his walks, and *SHE*, his Ursula!

Marius could hardly see her. But he was certain it was she, that sweet girl, that star which had been the light on his firmament, for six months Yes! the vision had reappeared. Monsieur Leblanc was with her.

Jondrette spoke pleasantly to his visitor, who, as you must have guess d, was none oth r than Jean Valjean. He addressed him as 'philanthropist' He tried his best to put him in a good humour, and at last unfolded his tale of woe "Monsieur, to-morrow is the last day I must pay my land-lord this evening Look at my family. The old lady is down with fever. That girl, over there, has a serious wound sustained in a nasty accident. Will you permit us to be thrown into the streets in this condition'"

Jean Valjean (or M Leblanc, as Marius called him) put five francs into Jondrette's hand "Accept this now. I am going to take my

daughter home. I will come again in the evening, and bring you, sixty francs"

Jondrette's face was bright with satisfaction. "Thanks, my noble Monsieur. But please enable me to pay off my land-lord at eight to-night," he pleaded.

"I will be here exactly at six, and I will bring the sixty francs you need."

"My benefactor," cried Jondrette distractedly. Then he added in an undertone, "Take a good look at him, wife."

Jean Valjean took the arm of the beautiful Cosette, and taking leave of the Jondrettes, went out of the den.

After he had left, Jondrette asked his wife, "Did you take a good look at the fellow, dear?"

"Yes, dear," she replied.

Marius' eyes remained fixed upon the young Cosette, till she left. When Leblanc and Cosette went out, Marius thought of following them, so that he might find out their lodging He did not want to lose Cosette again, after having so miraculously found her He got down from the bureau and took his hat As he was putting his hand on the bolt of the door, he reflected and stopped Then he ran out, though not properly dressed, and stopped a cab. The driver, looking at Marius' dress, said, "Pay in advance" Marius felt in his pocket and found he had nothing He went back to his room Just as he was about to go up-stairs, he found Jondrette talking to a man of a sinister appearance. If a policeman had seen them, he would have taken them

straight to the galleys Not desiring to appear to be prying into other's secrets, Marius rushed up to his room. Hardly had he entered it, when the elder Jondrette girl made her appearance again. Marius' plan of following his Cosette was scattered to the winds. It was too late.

"What do you want now?" Marius asked her, somewhat rudely.

"Nothing, Monsieur I wanted to ask you, if I could be of any help to you You seem to be ailing. You can employ me to do all kinds or jobs I can carry letters, go into houses, find out addresses, follow somebody Make use of me."

At first Marius was impatient. But an idea flashed into his mind

"You brought this old gentleman and his girl to your room, didn't you?" he asked her.

"Yes, Monsieur"

"Do you know their address?"

"No."

"Find it out for me."

"I shall do so But I shall expect a suitable present from you" she replied. In a moment, she had disappeared. Marius was left to himself.

He dropped into a chair, his head dizzy with thoughts, which he could not sort out. Suddenly, he was disturbed from his reverie, by a loud discussion in Jondrette's den He jumped upon the bureau and resumed his stand at the opening in the ceiling. He heard the following words spoken by Jondrette:

"It was eight years ago! But I can recognize

him. The same height, same face, same voice Somewhat better dressed, that is all. Ah mysterious old devil, I have caught you!"

Then, looking at his elder daughter, Jondrette said, "You must be ready at five o'clock. You understand?"

Jondrette's wife then asked her husband, "What about the girl that he brought with him?"

"Don't you remember her? She was our serveant-girl"

The wife sat up. "Is it she?"

"Yes. It is she, my dear"

"Now it is all quite clear. The fellow paid us and took the girl away from our tavern," added the woman.

"Listen attentively, this man is trapped. I have arranged men for the job Six o'clock is a good time, because our neighbour, that young man, will be away till eleven. We shall finish our job"

Marius had heard enough, to understand the situation He decided to keep watch that evening, because his dear Ursula and her father were involved in the affair.

10 A NEST OF MONSTERS

It was nearing six Marius was seated on his bed. Though a dreamer, he was of a strong and energetic character He had already visited the Headquarters Police Station, and informed the police of the conspiracy that the Jondrettes were hatching The Inspector noted every thing producing a plan in secret

and said, "I don't think you will need our presence urgently Of course, we will be there in time. In the meantime, keep watch See that nothing goes amiss. You say, you can look through the aperture You also say, it is big enough for a hand to pass through That is good. Take these two pistols, in case of an emergency. Watch through the hole. If you think that the situation calls for intervention, fire one of the pistols. A shot in the air will do, Monsieur. You are a lawyer. You know. But shoot only if it is absolutely necessary The rest is our affair."

When Marius returned home from Police Headquarters, Jondrette had, fortunately, just left for a short outing. He entered his room unnoticed and sat on his bed, awaiting the important hour He was not afraid, but he could not think, without a shudder, of the things which were soon to take place. To him, that day seemed a dream.

He looked through the aperture, for a moment, at Madame Jondrette. She had pulled an old sheet-iron furnace out of a corner and was fumbling about in the old iron. Marius got down from the rickety bureau as quietly as he could, taking care to make no noise. In the midst of his apprehension at what was in store, and the horror which the Jondrettes had excited in him, he felt a sort of happiness at the thought, that it would, perhaps, be given to him, to render some great service to *HER* whom he loved.

But what was he to do? Warn the persons

threatened? Where could he find them? He did not know their address. They had reappeared before his eyes for an instant, then they had plunged into the boundless depths of Paris again. Should he wait at the door for M. Leblanc at six o'clock in the evening, the time when he would arrive, and warn him of the plot? But Jondrette and his men would find him at his post, the place was solitary, they were stronger than he, they would find means to seize him, or get him out of the way, and he, whom Marius wished to save, would be lost. One o'clock had just struck, the ambuscade was to be carried out at six. Marius had five hours before him. There was but one thing to be done.

He put on his most presentable coat, took his hat, and went out, without making any noise. He was half-way down the street, near a low wall, which he could have stepped over in some places, and which ran along a broad field, he was walking slowly, absorbed in thought, and the snow deadened his steps. All at once, he heard voices very near him. He turned his head, but the street was empty, there was nobody about, it was broad daylight, and yet he had heard them distinctly. It occurred to him, that he should look over the wall.

There were, in fact, two men seated in the snow, with their backs to the wall, talking in low tones. These two forms were unknown to him, one was a bearded man in a blouse, and the other, a long-haired man in tatters. The bearded man wore a cap; the other was bareheaded, and

there was snow in his hair. By bending his head over them, Marius could over-hear their conversation The long-haired one said to the other: "It can't fail" Marius did not want to be away from his room. So he went back to it, as quietly as he had come out of it. As he entered, he heard a sound emanating from Jondrette's den It was Jondrette giving instructions. He heard these words:

"Have you greased the hinges of the door lest they make a noise? . Now, the girls must keep watch. Are you sure that our neighbour is out?"

Then the wife's voice was heard. "Our neighbour is out We need not worry about him."

Then Jondrette said to his daughter: "Listen, child. Watch carefully. Don't let the house-door out of your sight, even for a minute. If you notice anything, report it to me immediately"

Marius followed this conversation from his bed He waited for the fixed hour and when he knew that it had come, he rose to resume his place near the opening In a minute, he was at his post of observation.

Six o'clock struck. The distant and dismal vibration of a bell shook the windows. Just then, the door of the next room opened. Jondrette's wife led Leblanc in. As soon as he entered, Loblanc paid the promised sixty francs to Jendrette, saying, "Monsieur, take this now for your rent. We shall see about the rest, later on."

"God bless you, my benefactor!" said Jondrette mechanically.

Then Leblanc was made to sit down The two men began to talk of casual topics

As they were talking, some one came in noiselessly, the well-oiled hinges co-operating with the Jondrettes The new-comer sat down, in silence, in a dark corner Leblanc did not hear the steps of the man, did not see him coming in, but his instinct told him, that some stranger had come. He looked at the phantom.

"Who is this?" he asked

"He is a neighbour Pay no attention to him," said Jondrette "Now, to come to the point," he continued, "I have been telling you of a painting, our family heirloom If it had not been for our unfortunate circumstance, I would not sell it."

A second man entered and sat down quietly. Soon, he was followed by another.

Leblanc now suspected some danger. His face showed embarrassment and suspicion.

"They are all friends They are dark, and dressed in nasty clothes, because they work in a charcoal factory Don't let them disturb your peace of mind, my benefactor. But give me a price for my painting and help me."

The "picture" that Jondrette spoke of, was a crude, old painting. When Jondrette was singing its praises, Leblanc understood that Jondrette was only spreading his net.

"Please pay me a thousand crowns for the painting. I will not take anything less," Jondrette said.

Marius' attention was riveted to the scene. In his right hand, he held a pistol.

Leblanc was silent, for he knew that there was no answer to the demand of Jondrette. Suddenly, the humility and courtesy of Jondrette vanished. He cried out, to the surprise of Leblanc, in a voice of authority. "But all that is not to the point. Do you know me?"

Immediately, the door opened; and three men in blue blouses entered. They wore black paper-masks. The first had an iron cudgel, the second carried an axe; the third had a key, stolen from a prison door. It appeared, that Jondrette had been engaging Leblanc in useless talk, only to pass the time till the arrival of these monsters. Jondrette had no need to fear hereafter. He received the men, and gave them instructions openly.

Leblanc's face grew pale. He understood everything Marius thought, that the time for firing the pistol had come. He raised his right hand to the ceiling of the den, ready to let off his pistol.

At this moment, Jondrette came back to Leblanc and asked again: "You don't recognize me?"

Leblanc answered, "No."

"What, forgotten so soon? I am not Jondrette, as you think. *I am Thenardier* Do you see? It was from my custody, that you took that girl, when I was running an inn at Montfermeil. Is it clear now?"

Marius was thunderstruck. His right hand, which held the pistol, dropped down slowly as

the name 'Thenardier' fell upon his ears. He remembered, what that name meant to him. It was the name of his father's saviour. Had not his father left a will, just before his death, asking his son to give Thenardier help if he met him? Here was that Thenardier!

"Is the saviour of my father a bandit, a murderer, a monster? Great God! What mockery!" Marius' head was reeling.

Marius had no time to lose in useless emotional rambles. Was he to shoot Thenardier, or leave the father of Ursula to the tender mercies of the monsters? It seemed on the one hand, that Ursula was entreating him for her father, and on the other, that his father was commending Thenardier to him

Meanwhile, Thenardier (let us hereafter call him by his true name) turned to Leblanc again. "Ha! you don't know me! I know you You old child-stealer. I will gnaw your heart out now." Leblanc pushed over the chair with his foot, the table with his hand, and at one bound, with marvellous agility, he was at the window. Before he could finish what he had attempted, Thenardier's wife clutched him by the hair and brought him back into the room. The accomplices of Thenardier rushed towards Leblanc; one of them raised a huge club over his head.

In a second, Marius decided to protect his Urusula's father. He put his finger to the trigger. In half a second, the shot would have been fired. But Thenardier's voice rang out.

"Do him no harm!"

Marius' finger was lifted off the trigger.

A Herculean struggle now commenced With one blow full in the chest, M Leblanc sent one of his attackers sprawling into the middle of the room; then, with two back strokes, he knocked down two other assailants, whom he gripped, one under each knee. The wretches screamed under the pressure, as if they had been held between granite mill-stones, but the four others seized the formidable old man by the arms and the waist, and held him down They succeeded in throwing him upon the bed nearest to the window, and held him down there.

This desperate attempt of the victim, far from exasperating Thenardier, calmed him. There were two men in him, the ferocious man and the crafty man. Up to this moment, in the first flush of triumph, before his prey had been stricken down motionless, the ferocious man in him had predominated, now that the victim resisted, and seemed to desire a struggle, the crafty man reappeared and resumed control

"Move off, and leave Monsieur!" he shouted. "Tie him to the foot of the bed," said Thenardier to the brigands, who were near Leblanc Then he resumed talking to Leblanc. "Monsieur, why did you want to jump through the window? You would have broken your leg. Let that be. I noticed one peculiarity with you. Whatever happens to you, you do not cry out. That is strange I know why people are silent when in trouble—because they want to avoid the police. *I* want to avoid the police. Your silence

shows that you, too, have something to hide .... So let us come to terms"

Leblanc did not breathe a word. He continued keeping silent, which mystified Thenardier

Thenardier brought pen and ink to him.

"Monsieur, a good man like you, can give even two hundred thousand francs to an unfortunate family. You may say, 'I have not got so much money But it is not money, that I want now Please write what I dictate"

"Write? How can I write? My hands are tied"

"That is true, Monsieur, pardon me."

Thenardier freed Leblanc's right hand He then dipped the pen into the ink and gave it to him. "Be so kind, as to take down these few words" Thenardier began to dictate

"My dear daughter . Come immediately . .I have urgent need of you The person . . who brings this will bring you to me. Come with confidence.' Now sign the letter By the way, what is Monsieur's name?"

Leblanc answered, "Urbain Fabre."

"Well, sign U F."

The prisoner signed U.F

"Put your address on this envelope." Leblanc took up the pen and wrote: "*Mademoiselle Fabre at Monsieur Urbain Fabre's, No 17, Rue Saint Dominique d'Enfer.*"

Thenardier seized the letter and gave it to his wife. "You know what you have to do. There is a carriage ready. Go, right away and

come back with that." Then he addressed the man with the axe, "Go with the woman"

A gloomy silence now pervaded the place which a little while before, had been a very inferno.

Marius waited anxiously. He was not able to follow anything. Who was this little girl that Thenardier asked Leblanc to bring? The two letters, U.F., had now been explained as Urbain Fabre. So his beloved was not Ursula but Urbain Fabre. "At all events, if that lark should be brought here by the wife of Thenardier, I will give my blood to save her and keep her," he resolved to himself

A good half hour passed. The she-wolf returned. As she entered, she cried, "False address"

Marius heaved a sigh of relief His Ursula was safe!

Thenardier's eyes began to glow.

"What did you hope to gain by giving a false address?" he interrogated Leblanc.

Leblanc's despair had made him bold. He answered in a ringing voice, "To gain time."

Thenardier gave a sign to all his accomplices. They rushed round the unfortunate prisoner on all sides. "Do with me, what you will," the prisoner said "I am not afraid of death. If you want, I shall give you a demonstration."

Immediately, he snatched the chisel from one of the brigands and cut off a slice of flesh from his left arm. All stood stupefied. Even the brigands shuddered.

Marius staggered, not knowing what to do.

"Lay hold of him," said Thenardier. "There is only one thing to do, and that is to kill him"

Then Thenardier and his wife held counsel.

Marius, like Leblanc, was now facing a hard test. Once more, he became confused He had to kill Thenardier before the latter could carry out his ugly design. Yet, was he to ignore the will of a dear father—to ignore the *dying wish* of Colonel Pontmercy? Was there no other way out? He looked vacantly here and there, up and down, from his perch on high His eye fell on a piece of paper in the tray. An idea, a flash! Yes, he would try this first, before using the pistol. That piece of paper was in the handwriting of Thenardier's daughter. There were these words on it, "*The police are here, quick*" He knelt down upon the office-table, caught up the bit of paper, and wrapping it up he threw it into the middle of the den.

"Something fell," cried Madame Thenardier. "I think it was a sheet of paper." Saying this, she picked it up and handed it to her husband.

Thenardier read the words. His face grew pale. "How did this come here?" he asked

"Perhaps our daughter threw it through the window, to warn us. Surely, it is our daughters' handwriting," answered the woman

Thenardier's business, hereafter, was his own escape. "Quick, get a ladder. Clear the place immediately"

"Without cutting this fellow's throat?" asked his wife.

"We have not got the time Our daughter has given us a warning Let us act quickly, else we shall be caught"

The bandits vied with one another, in finding means of escape When they were about to leave, Javert entered!

That devil of a Police Inspector!

He seemed to smell an offence, even at a great distance He always came at the right time

The frightened bandits immediately tried, to arm themselves with whatever weapon they could find, to blow out the brains of Javert.

"Dear fellows! That trick won't pay. We are fifteen. We have better weapons," said Javert with a triumphant smile, and then called out, "Come in now."

A squad of sergeants with drawn swords, and officers, armed with axes and clubs, rushed in, at Javert's call They bound the bandits, who were powerless against such odds.

"Handcuffs on all," ordered Javert.

Within a minute, all the members of the conspiracy, including Thenardier and his wife, stood manacled.

The face of Leblanc was not visible to Javert The Inspector knew, that some one was going to be the victim of the gang he had arrested. Again, his attention was more upon the brigands than on Leblanc. He ordered, "Untie Monsieur and let none leave the room." A policeman untied Leblanc and rejoined his colleagues. Javert sat down and drew out a stamped sheet of paper from his pocket, evidently to write down the

charge against the culprits. This took only two minutes: he then said, "Bring forward the gentleman whom these fellows have tortured"

The officers looked about them. The prisoner, Monsieur Leblanc, or Urbain Fabre (or the father of Ursula) was not to be found anywhere. He had disappeared! If the door was guarded, there was the window to escape through. An officer ran to the window and looked out, nobody could be seen outside. Only the rope ladder was trembling

"The devil has escaped," said Javert.

The brigands followed the policemen to their proper destination.

11 MARIUS AND COSETTE

How Jean Valjean came to leave the Convent need not any longer be a mystery While in the Convent, he could no doubt see Cosette, and play with her But he feared that if she should stay in it too long, she would certainly become a nun. He did not want to deny the child her right to know what life was, before renouncing it To cut her off in advance, and to take advantage of her ignorance and isolation, appeared to be an outrage on a human creature. Who knew, but, pondering over all this some day, and being a nun, with regret, Cosette might come to hate him? So, he resolved, that they should leave the Convent. He was no longer afraid of the outside world. He had grown old, and had

changed. Who could recognize him? As to Cosette's education, she had had enough of it.

Having decided to leave the Convent, Jean Valjean waited for an opportunity His benefactor, Fauchelevent, had been dead some months. Jean Valjean went to the Prior requested, that he might be discharged from service, because his late brother had left him enough for his maintenance. The Prioress, though somewhat reluctantly, permitted him to retire and take his daughter with him, to help him, in his old age.

Thus he left the Convent. However, he did not appear in the open city, without much anxiety. He selected his lodging somewhere in the Rue Plumet, and stayed there, under the name of Ultimus Fauchelevent At the same time, he hired two other lodgings in Paris, so that he might be able to change from one to another, as occasion demanded. These two lodgings were widely distant from one another. He engaged a servant, named Toussaint.

Every day, Jean Valjean took Cosette out to the least frequented walk of the Luxembourg and every Sunday he took her to Mass. He gave alms to the poor, and visited the needy and the sick. Often, he appeared in the dress of an officer, retired from military duties. Sometimes, he also affected the air of an old officer.

Cosette had been still little more than a child, when she left the Convent. She was a little more than fourteen years old then. On leaving it, she could have found nothing more remote

and more dangerous, than the house on the Rue Plumet. She lived there very happily, in the company of her 'father,' listening to his loving words. She had but a vague memory of her childhood She prayed morning and evening, for her mother, whom she had never known

The Thenardiers remained to her, two hideous creatures of a nightmare. It seemed to her, that she had commenced her life in an abyss, and Jean Valjean had drawn her out of it. While Cosette was a little girl, Jean Valjean used to tell her about her mother When she became a young maiden, this was impossible for him. He felt a horror, at clouding Cosette's thoughts with sad memories One day, Cosette said to him, "Father, I saw my mother in a dream. She had two wings She must have attained sanctity in her life."

"Through martyrdom," answered Jean Valjean. It was just then, that Marius, after the lapse of six months, met them at the Luxembourg. Destiny was slowly bringing these two young people nearer each other At the particular moment, when Cosette had looked at him with the glance which so affected Marius, Marius had no suspicion, that he also had glanced at her, in a way which had affected Cosette.

Marius and Cosette did not know each other's feelings so far. They had not spoken, they had not bowed to each other, they had not been introduced to each other They had only seen each other, and like the stars in the sky, separated by millions of leagues, they lived by

gazing upon each other Thus it was, that Cosette became a woman, beautiful and loving. However, because of her innocence she was not aware of the love that had silently stolen into her heart.

12 AT THE RUE PLUMET

As Cosette grew into womanhood, she became less light-hearted. Jean Valjean noticed that she was becoming silent and thoughtful. He could not understand the reason for it; he did not know, that even in his presence, Cosette and Marius had spoken to each other *with their eyes.* He wanted to avoid Marius, not because the young man cast longing, lingering looks on his sweet daughter, but because the latter might be a member of the police, or a spy.

Of course, it took sometime for Cosette to attach any importance to Marius. Marius adored her, even on the first day he saw her. But Cosette took time, because she was young Marius was eager to see her, she, perhaps, even forgot his visits to the Luxembourg walk. But such a stage does not last for ever

One day, she suddenly thought of Marius. From that day, she had no other thought. His image filled her mind completly. To an old man like Jean Valjean, the gloom reflected through the face of a love-smitten maiden, does not explain itself correctly. Jean Valjean, himself, was visited by dark thoughts Thus, the life of both grew dark, though the reason of the gloom

was not the same, in both cases There was left to them but one distraction, which had formerly been a "pleasure" to carry bread to those who were hungry So, now when they had a happy day, when many sorrows were relieved, Cosette was a little gay. It was during this period, that they had visited the den of the Jondrettes.

The day after the visit, Jean Valjean appeared in the cottage in the morning, as calm as usual But he had a wound in his left arm, which gave him great pain It confined him within doors, for more than a month and made him ill with fever To Cosette's questions about the wound, he gave evasive answers. Cosette entreated him to consult a doctor, but he would not see one. Cosette dressed the wound, night and morning When she nursed the old man with the genuine affection of a daughter, the old ex-convict felt all his former happiness return, his fears and his anxieties disappear Cosette read him the books he loved.

Her careful and gentle nursing brought him new life The Luxembourg, the unknown young spy, Cosette's past coldness — these had been the clouds of his soul, they faded away now.

As to the hideous experience in the Jondrette den, he never mentioned it to Cosette.

Cosette had the voice of a nightingale, and, sometimes in the evenings, she sang melodious songs which delighted the heart of Jean Valjean She had learnt to sing at the Convent. When Cosette saw that her father was suffering less and was getting well, she felt

very happy With this happiness, the darkness that had clouded her mind, disappeared In the mornings, when she went with Jean Valjean to the garden for quarter of an hour, when she walked with him in the sun, supporting his wounded arm, she laughed every moment: she was once again, the sweet Cosette. Jean Valjean was glad, that she had again become cheerful and rosy.

Jean Valjean's wound had been completely cured He was able to move about, without assistance. Protracted lying in bed made him want to go out, when he got well. One day, he took leave of Cosette and went away on his usual trip to the unknown regions of Paris. He promised to return in two or three days, at the most.

That night, Cosette was sitting alone in the parlour. To amuse herself, she turned to the piano, and began to sing, accompanying herself on it.

Suddenly, it seemed to her, that she heard a step in the garden It could not be her father, for he was absent The servant was asleep. It was ten o'clock Who could it be? She went to the window, which was closed, and put her ear to it. It appeared to her, that it was a man's step, and that he was treading very softly. Immediately, she ran up to her room, opened a slide in the blind, and looked into the garden. The moon was full She could see very clearly. There was nobody outside. The garden was absolutely silent. Cosette decided that she had

been mistaken She had simply imagined that she had heard a noise. She thought no more about it.

The next day, towards nightfall, she was walking in the garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which filled her mind, she thought she heard a sound, like that which she had heard the previous evening But she paid no attention to it, as she could see nothing. She noticed, however, at a distance, some sort of a shadow, which seemed to be moving. She came out of the shrubbery, and her own shadow was cast upon the plot of grass. Suddenly she stood still, trembling. By the side of her shadow, there was another, a shadow with a round hat. It appeared to be that of a man, who might have been standing at the edge of the shrubbery, a few feet away from Cosette. She could not shout, or call, or stir for a moment At last, summoning up courage, she looked back to see who it was. There was nobody there. The shadow had disappeared. She felt her blood run cold Could it be hallucination, or a devil? But devils do not wear round hats!

The next day, Jean Valjean returned. Cosette narrated to him, what she thought she had heard and seen. Jean Valjean became anxious. He went to the spot and looked all around it. He found, it was, after all, nothing. It was the shadow of the sheet-iron stove-pipe, which rose above a neighbouring roof, and had a cap at the top.

Cosette laughed loudly at her own ignorance,

and said to herself, that she would not be afraid of shadows in the garden, even at dead of night

A few days later, Jean Valjean went out again, on a short tour That evening, Cosette was seated, musing, on a seat in the garden, near the barred gate overlooking the street. A vague sadness was coming over her, little by little. She rose, walked slowly round the garden, and then returned to her seat Just as she was sitting down, she noticed in the place she had left, a large stone, which had not been there, earlier. The idea that some one had put it there, came to her, and frightened her. It was genuine fear, this time. She did not touch the stone. She fled, without daring to look behind, and took refuge in the house.

At sun-rise, Cosette went back to the spot. In the morning, we laugh at our terrors of the night before What is fright by night, is curiosity by day. Yes, there was the stone. She moved it There was something underneath it, which resembled a letter. Cosette picked it up. It *was* a letter. There was no address on it She examined it. There was no more fear in her. It was the beginning of anxious interest.

Cosette drew the sheets of the letter out of the envelope. So many pages! Now these pages, from whom had they come? Who could have written them? Cosette did not hesitate for a moment Only one man could have written them.

Evening came. Jean Valjean went out again. Cosette dressed herself in her best. At dusk, she went to the garden. She sat on her usual seat.

At once, she felt that there was somebody standing behind her She turned her head and stood up It was HE.

Yes It was Marius He appeared wretched and thin. Cosette, ready to faint, did not utter a word She drew back slowly. He did not move

"Pardon me Don't think me bold I could not live as I was So, I am here Did you read my letter? Do you recognize me?.. Don't be afraid. It was at the Luxembourg And the day you passed before me! It will be soon a year. For a very long time, I have not seen you anywhere How could I find out, where you lived? The other evening I stood behind you, you turned round and fled. One evening you sang. Pardon me for talking to you. Am I annoying you?"

Cosette was having a new experience. She sank down, as if she were about to faint. He caught her, and supported her She looked at him

"You love me, then?" he asked.

She answered in a low voice. "Need I say it? It is superfluous You know it"

Gradually, they began to talk freely.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Marius. And yours?"

"Cosette."

That and many more evenings were spent very happily

One evening, when Marius came, he found Cosette sad She had been weeping. When he sat beside her, on the seat, she said, "My father tells me, that we must go away to England. He

has asked me to be ready to leave very soon. He says, he has business in that country"

Marius trembled from head to foot.

She resumed: "This morning, my father told me to settle my affairs and to get ready. He said, we must have a large trunk for me and a small one for him. He has asked me to get ready, within a week."

Marius inquired, "When exactly are you to start?"

"My father did not say when."

"When will you return?"

"He told me nothing."

Marius arose, and with longing in his eyes, asked, "Cosette, will you go?"

Cosette turned her beautiful eyes, full of anguish, on him and answered, "Marius, I have an idea. Come and stay where we go."

Marius was now a man, entirely awakened. He said, "Go with you, dear? It means money I have none. Further, how can I get to England? I am a pauper You see me at night and therefore, you have no idea of my wretched condition. If you see me by day, you would give me a sou.[1] That is my position."

He threw himself on the seat and remained there, for a long time, deep in thought. All of a sudden, he had an idea; he said, "Listen; don't expect me until the day after tomorrow."

"Why not?"

"You will soon find out."

"A whole day without seeing you?"

[1] *sou* is a French coin of the lowest value.

"Let us sacrifice a day, to gain a life-time."

"What is your plan Marius?"

"My idea is this that it is impossible that God should wish to separate us Expect me, then, the day after-tomorrow"

Cosette thought of a bright future in Marius' plan, and gave him leave to go

13 GRANDFATHER AND GRANDSON

Marius had only one plan—to try and get his grandfather's help Grandfather Gillenormand had, at this period, completed his ninetyfirst year Marius had long been separated from him, and wanted to find out, whether the natural love of a grandfather for a grandson, long separated from him, would prevail He was the only one whom he could approach for money, and should approach, for permission To marry Cosette, the old man's blessings and consent would be appropriate. So he went to his grandfather's house

The old man was in his study Though advanced in years, he was active and strong For four years, he had waited for runaway Marius, hoping that the haughty fellow might one day ring at his door. But Marius had not appeared The heart of the grandfather, who had been a father also, melted with sorrow. Absence had only increased the grandfather's love for the young man, who had left him so abruptly The old man was reading a book that day. The servant went into the study and said, "Monsieur, our

grandchild, Marius, has come Will Monsieur receive him?" The old man straightened up He faltered, "Monsieur Marius! Show him in"

The door opened. But Marius stopped in the doorway, waiting to be called in His dress was wretched. His face was sad, but calm

The grandfather was speechless with astonishment and joy He sat for some moments, unable to see anything. Then he asked, "What have you come here for, my son? Is it to ask my pardon? I am glad At least now, you see your fault"

"No, Monsieur."

The grandfather's violent method of making his grandson tender, produced only silence on the part of Marius. The grandfather then spoke again.

"Then you have come to ask me for something. What is it? Speak"

"Monsieur," said Marius, "I want your permission to marry."

The grand-father was surprised was taken aback. "Marry at twenty-one! You have arranged everything, I suppose. You simply want my formal permission, in anticipation of which, you have settled the affair?"

Marius attempted to answer. But the old man continued.

"Now tell me, how much money you make as a lawyer."

"Nothing," said Marius firmly.

"Nothing? You have nothing to live on, except the allowance I have been sending you?"

Marius made no answer

Then the girl must be rich Is she?"

"She is as poor as I am"

"What? No dowry?"

"No I expected you to " Marius had not completed his sentence when the old man cut in, with a "No, *never*"

The tone in which his grandfather said "never," made Marius lose all hope He immediately bowed, and was about to leave the room The old man seized him by the collar, drew him back into the room, pushed him into a chair and exclaimed, "Tell me all about it! Don't go."

"Father," resumed Marius "My good father, if you but knew how I love her! Now, I see her everyday at her own house Her father does not know about it But they are going away! I said to myself. "I will see my grandfather, and tell him about it Now I have come to you Father, I must marry her."

"Yes, dear Marius. You have my consent Is that all right? Make that girl your mistress."

"*Make that girl your mistress!*" That phrase pierced the heart of the chaste young man, like a sword Marius revolved it in his mind. He understood what his grandfather wanted to say. He was simply fooling him. He was indirectly refusing permission.

Marius rose, picked up his hat and walked towards the door, with firm steps There, he turned, bowed profoundly to the old man, raised his head again and said.

"Five years ago, you outraged my father;

to-day you have outraged my fiancee. I ask nothing more of you, Monsieur, Adieu"

The old man remained silent for a few moments Then with a break in his voice, he cried, "Run after him! Call him! Oh! my God! This time, he will not come back"

He went to the window overlooking the street, and shouted: "Marius! Marius!"

But Marius was already out of sight.

14 A SPARK FOR THE EXPLOSION

The city of Paris was like a barrel of gunpowder. A spark was enough to make it explode. Sparks were supplied, periodically, after the French Revolution In June 1832, one such spark fell on the city. It was the death of General Lamarque.

Lamarque was no ordinary citizen He had done meritorious service for the country. He had been a fine orator, and a great fighter in the cause of freedom for the people He had served as a general during the Revolution. After having upheld authority, he upheld liberty. He was one of the supporters of the Republic. His death was, therefore, no small event for Paris. Anything bitter produced a revolt in Paris. The death of Lamarque was most bitter to all people—to his friends, because of their great sorrow; to others, because of their fear, that Paris would become the scene of trouble and confusion The government however breathed a sigh of relief, for one of its strong opponents was dead.

The funeral was fixed for the morning of the 5th. of June The route along which the funeral cortege was to pass, assumed a formidable aspect. Men armed themselves as best as they could Everywhere, there was a great stir Not only Lamarque's Republican friends, but all the people, put on the appearance of mourning The government, fearing that something untoward might happen, called in extra troops, which were stationed in the city, by way of precaution.

The procession was the grandest and the most solemn, that Paris ever witnessed. Two battalions, drums muffled, muskets reversed, and ten thousand National Guards, their swords at their sides, and all the batteries of the artillery of the National Guard followed the coffin. The hearse was drawn by youths. As the procession moved forward, the crowd in all the passages and streets of Paris swelled, like the sea It was only that day, that Paris showed publicly all its wretched citizens. Out came stone-cutters' children waving green branches, carpenters who had gone on strike, printers, and all sorts of people, all of them armed with clubs, shouting slogans.

An armed multitude accompanied the procession A terrified multitude looked on. The government was not idle It watched everything, with its hand upon the hilt of the sword Earlier in the day, it had posted twentyfour thousand soldiers among the citizens, and another thirty thousand, on the outskirts of the city.

The funeral procession passed on, till it

reached the Bastille, which was the state prison. It rained at intervals. Near the Bastille, the procession had to cross a little bridge, to reach the esplanade over the bridge of Austerlitz. There, it stopped The vast sea of human beings stood silent. A funeral oration was delivered The members of the procession were moved to tears by the speaker, who was himelf a very great man Just at this moment, a man rushed up to the place on horse-back, dressed in black, carrying a red flag! It was the signal for revolt.

The hearse passed on But it had gone only another two hundred paces, when the expected happened. What was it? *Revolt*! The women fled in terror The mob scattered in different directions, stones fell like hail Men cried, "To arms!" Noise and commotion, the first signs of the great explosion, were clearly in evidence.

15 THE DESPERATE RESOLUTION

Marius left his grandfather's residence in no happy mood. He had entered it with a slight hope, no doubt; but he left, in utter despair In fact, after meeting the old man, he forgot himself in his extreme mental agony. He walked through the streets of Paris, unmindful of consequences. He had taken with him, the pistols given to him by Javert, which he had not cared to return. He had changed his lodging from the accursed dwelling of Jondrette to another locality, the day after that terrible incident, and as the police were not likely to know his new address, he did

not worry about the pistols very much Marius did not know why he was carrying the pistols They were loaded He rambled about all day, aimlessly, regardless of the showers of bullets He did not even want his dinner As he walked along the deserted boulevards, he seemed to hear strange sounds He roused himself from his reverie and asked himself, "Is there any fighting going on?"

He had promised to meet Cosette precisely at 9 o'clock He could not forget that engagement He went to the Rue Plumet. It was forty-eight hours since he had seen her. He was now going to meet her Every other thought aded away. The desperate youth's face beamed with joy, for once, that day Marius reached Cosette's garden, but she was not at the spot, where she usually waited for him. Marius crossed the thicket and went towards the steps He did not find her even there He looked up at the house and saw the shutters closed.

Marius was, once again, in the grip of despair and gloom. He looked at the stone seat where he had spent so many happy hours with Cosette. Then he sat down upon the steps, his heart full of tenderness and resolution He told himself, that there was nothing more for him to do, but to die, since Cosette had gone.

Suddenly he heard a voice. It appeared to come from the street It cried, "Marius."

He arose

"Monsieur Marius," said the voice, "your friends are at the barricade in the Rue de la

Chanvrerie." Marius ran to the grating, pushed aside the movable bar, and pushed his head through. He saw a young man rapidly disppearing in the twilight

Marius left the Rue Plumet.

Where was Cosette?

Jean Valjean had long suspected, that some people were taking too much interest in his movements, but he had not so far cared to take any step. One day, he saw Thenardier, but fortunately Thenardier did not see him. It appeared certain to Jean Valjean, that Thenardier was prowling about the locality Thenardier must have escaped from prison, and that was like letting a tiger out of its cage. Moreover, Paris was not quiet and the police were very active, especially the secret police So Jean Valjean decided to leave Paris, and even France, and go away to England He had told Cosette so He wished to be gone in less than a week. Every minute, he was anxious. But the actual circumstance that caused him to leave the Rue Plumet was this· One day, he was walking in his garden, absorbed in thought A folded paper fell on the ground, as if a hand had dropped it from above his head He took the paper, unfolded it and read it. There was only one word That was, "Remove" Jean Valjean rose hastily. He decided to leave, that very day. Accompanied by Cosette and Toussaint, his servant, he went to his house in the Rue de l Homme Arme. Cosette did not like the sudden change She knew, that Marius would visit her at her former home and

return disappointed, because she had not informed him of their going away to another house. She objected to the change, but she did not understand the fears of Jean Valjean Cosette had to yield. For the first time, Jean Valjean stood firm against the wish of his dear Cosette He did not realise her sadness, nor did she understand his anxiety This departure from the Rue Plumet was a flight

This was how Cosette disappeared from the Rue Plumet. But how could Marius understand?

On arriving at her new home, Cosette wrote to Marius at once The contents of the letter would have remained a secret, but for a little carelessness on her part She blotted the whole letter, when it was still wet, and the impression of the words was left on the sheet of blotting paper She put the blotting paper on a wooden stand, opposite her mirror. Jean Valjean's eyes casually fell on the mirror He was surprised to see a letter reflected in it.

It was in Cosette's hand It read as follows:—

"*My beloved, alas, my father wishes to start immediately We shall be at No. 7, Rue de l' Homme Arme to-night In a week, we shall be in London. Cosette, June 4*".

Jean Valjean stood surprised. He guessed that the letter was intended for "him" only 'Him' meant Marius. He did not, of course, know his name, but he found out who the man was at once. From that moment, he began to hate Marius

Five minutes later, he went out into the

street. Some one came up to him and asked for number Seven

"What do you want with number seven?" asked Jean Valjean.

The messenger, a boy, stopped, fearing he had said too much. Jean Valjean guessed he was carrying a letter. He wanted to extract it from him. So, he asked him:

"Have you brought a letter? I am waiting for it." The boy answered, "I think it is meant for a girl."

Jean Valjean did not hesitate. "Yes, yes, I know. I have to deliver it to her. Give it to me."

"In that case, you must know from where I come. I come from the barricade."

"Yes I know."

The messenger gave the letter to Jean Valjean.

"The reply must be sent to" . began Jean Valjean

"Rue de la Chanvrerie," completed the messenger.

The messenger went away

Jean Valjean went into the house with Marius' letter, and read it. These words were written in it:

"*When you read this, my soul will be near you.*"

Jean Valjean heaved a sigh of relief.

All the troubles he apprehended, relating to Cosette, would not now arise. Cosette would never know what had become of Marius. "If he is not dead yet, it is certain that he will die," said Jean Valjean to himself.

16. THE BARRICADE

All Paris was astir. The defenders of the Republic had already come to grips with the Government, which was then under a king. Marius, who had started life with notions favourable to monarchy (which his grandfather had instilled into him) was now a great champion of the Republic He had already been informed of the revolt, and the news reached him at the right time He was, at that moment, vexed with his own life, having had to face a series of disappointments He found no joy in life and decided to end it The news of the trouble supplied him with the means to do so His friends had already gone to the fight, and one of them had even sent word to Marius, asking him to join them

The soldiers of the Government were trying to handle the situation. The friends of the Republic, on the other hand, were trying to put up barricades and entrench themselves in their positions It was no small job. The Rue de la Chanvrerie was the strategic spot. It had been specially chosen by the friends of the Republic. The entrance to the street was wide, and the further end was narrow. All the people now set to work raising barricades In a few minutes, twenty iron bars had been wrested from the grated front of a wine-shop and twenty yards of pavement had been torn up A band of men had seized a considerable quantity of timber, from the front of a neighbouring house, and laid it upon the casks. In a few minutes,

half the street was barred by a rampart, higher than the height of a man

The rain had ceased. Fresh recruits arrived Some workmen had brought a keg of gun-powder. Two barricades were now erected at the same time. One of these, a very narrow one, was constructed only of casks and paving stones. There were about fifty labourers and thirty men, armed with muskets, working at it

Nothing could be more fantastic than this band of men. All of them were working fast While they helped each other, they talked of possibilities—that they would have help by 3 o'clock in the morning—that they were sure of one regiment—that Paris would rise in revolt

As soon as the barricades were complete, each man was given thirty catridges, with detailed instructions regarding his position. The Republican flag was put up Everyone was to load his musket and get ready. Sentinels were placed outside the barricades

Why did the Government allow this? It was a sign, that it was taking its time and massing its forces.

Fifty Republicans waited to face fifty thousand Government soldiers.

One of the officers of the Republican group was parading on duty, when he caught sight of a stranger. The officer approached the man and asked, "Who are you?"

At this abrupt question, the man started. With a smile, which was most disdainful and resolute, he answered haughtily.

"I am an officer of the Government."

"What is your name?"

"Javert"

The Republican leader made a sign to four of the men In the twinkling of an eye, before Javert had time to turn round, he was seized, thrown down, bound and searched They found upon him, a little round card, framed between two glasses, bearing on one side, the arms of France engraved on it, with the words: *Member of the Vigilance*, on the other side, were his name, age, and designation Besides this, he had a watch and a purse, which contained a little money. They left him his empty purse and his watch.

The search finished, they raised Javert, tied his arms behind his back and fastened him to a post.

Javert did not utter a cry Every one shouted, "He is a spy." One of them said, "You will be shot ten minutes before the barricade is taken."

Javert replied in his most imperious tone, "Why not now? Why wait till then?"

"We are economising powder."

"Then do it with your knife"

"Spy, keep quiet We are judges, not murderers or cut-throats We will judge you first, and deal with you later But your fate is sealed."

At midnight, the Government forces started their attack on the barricade Many fell, dead or wounded, on both sides. In the meantime, the despe-

rate Marius had joined the struggle The fight was entering a new phase. Marius had no arms, for he had thrown away his pistols He noticed the keg of powder, near the door of the wine-shop As he turned half round, a soldier aimed at him At that moment, a hand was laid upon the muzzle of the musket as if to stop it Somebody had sprung forward He had saved Marius, but the ball had passed through the hand that covered the muzzle Marius hardly noticed it.

The insurgents, surprised, but not dismayed, rallied There was firing on both sides, and it seemed, as though hand-to-hand fighting would be the next stage

Marius was brave, and his disappointment in life made him desperately bold He was in the thick of the fight It seemed as if the barricade would be taken Just then, a thundering voice was heard.

"Begone, or I'll blow up the barricade" Everyone turned in the direction of the voice Marius had taken charge of the keg of powder. He was about to apply the torch to the powder The assailants ran pell-mell and were lost in the darkness. It was a terrible rout. The barricade was redeemed. All the Republicans flocked round Marius. One of the officers threw his arms round his neck, in sheer admiration.

Marius enquired, "Where is the leader?"

The reply came, "You are our leader"

In a few minutes, there was silence. Marius, had some time for his own work. It was just

then, that he received Cosette's letter He read it He had expected it But it gave him no new cheer Immediately, he sat down in a corner, tore a leaf from his pocket-book, and wrote a brief letter to Cosette

"Dear Cosette, our marriage is impossible. I have asked my grandfather. He has refused. I am penniless, and so are you I ran to your house, but I did not find you You know the promise I gave you I will keep it. I do love you. When you read this, my soul will be near you and will smile upon you"

He folded the paper and wrote upon it, the address he had noted in Cosette's letter to him. He despatched a messenger to Cosette with his letter, at once

The message, as has already been related, reached Jean Valjean promptly.

Then Marius took out his pocket-book again and wrote on the first page, the words :

"*I am Marius Pontmercy. My body must be carried to my grandfather, M Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire No. 6.*"

He then put his book into his coat pocket.

17 JEAN VALJEAN IN THE FIGHT

Marius had saved the barricade. Soon, it was enlarged. The Republicans raised it by two feet. They put it in order, cleared up the portion of a building, made its kitchen into a hospital, and dressed the wounded in it They also gathered up the powder scattered over the floor,

cast bullets, made cartridges, scraped lint distributed the arms of the fallen and carried away the corpses Most of the wounded could still fight, and wanted to Upon a straw-mattress in the improvised hospital, five men lay severely wounded. They were attended to

About 4 o'clock in the morning, the men at the barricade were counted They were thirty-seven. They were full of hope. They waited for the attack. They expected help from other quarters. All these hopes were communicated from one to another, in cheerful whispers Soon, an officer of the group returned from his reconnaissance, He said . "The whole army of Paris is fighting. A third of that army is coming to press upon this barricade As for your expectation that the people would revolt and join you, you need not have any hope Yesterday, they showed enthusiasm To-day, they do not stir. There is no hope. You are abandoned."

These words fell like thunder upon the group There was a moment of tense silence Then a voice from the depths of the group cried, "So be it. Let us make the barricade twenty feet high, and let us all stand by it. Let us show them, that if the people abandon the Republicans, the Republicans will never abandon the people."

After he had spoken, all the men in the group cried, "Long live death! We shall stay beside the barricade!"

"Why all?" asked one.

"All! All!"

"Thirty men are enough. Why sacrifice

more?" Marius raised his voice "Our friend is right Those who have families, mothers, sisters, wives—let them leave"

Nobody stirred

"Make haste—we have only quarter of an hour—or it will be too late"

Within a short time, it was settled who should stay and fight At this point, Jean Valjean entered the barricade in the uniform of the group.

"Who is this man?"

"Perhaps one that saves others," put in one

Marius whispered, "I know him"

That assurance was enough for them. Everyone welcomed Jean Valjean "Citizen, you are welcome ...By the by, you know we are going to die"

Jean Valjean stood calm.

Just then, the attention of the group fell on Javert. One of them went up to the Police Officer and asked him·

"Do you need anything?"

"I feel uncomfortable here. Tie me anywhere you like, but do not leave me to pass the night like this. Put me on a table"

A table was cleared. Javert was put upon it When they were tying Javert to the table, Jean Valjean's eye fell on the Inspector. The Inspector too, looked at Jean Valjean He recognized him He did not, however, show any signs of knowing him.

They had not long to wait. The fight started. Flashes of light lit up the barricade. The explo-

sions were terrible. After many minutes of fighting, one of the members of the Republican group said, "We want a mattress immediately With it, we can save the barricade It will, to some extent, prevent the shots from coming in"

Jean Valjean, who had not taken any part in the events of the day, now stood up He saw a mattress placed crosswise on the window of a house nearby. The mattress was hanging from two ropes

"Can someboby lend me a gun?" asked Jean Valjean.

One of the members gave him a gun. Jean Valjean aimed at the window and fired twice Both the ropes holding the mattress snapped. The mattress fell into the street.

But who would go and fetch it?

Jean Valjean went out, picked up the mattress, put it on his back, and returned to the barricade. He then put the mattress into the opening. He fixed it against the wall, so that the artillery men did not see it His help was timely Immediately, there came a volley of shots from the enemy's guns. But the mattress was useful protection. The enemy had exhausted all his artillery resources, and the second attack was over. The barricade was not affected. It had been saved again.

"Citizen, the Republic thanks you," shouted the men to Jean Valjean. "The barricade has two saviours, Marius and you."

Now, to turn to Javert.

"We won't forget you, amidst our business,"

one of the group said to the Inspector He then issued a general command, "The last man to leave will blow out this spy's brains"

"Where?" asked one

"Take him out and execute him"

Jean Valjean appeared on the spot, at this moment "Friends, you have thanked me just now. Do I deserve a reward?"

"Certainly you do," said a leader

"Well, the reward I ask for, is, that I may blow out this man's brains myself"

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean make an imperceptible movement and said, "That is only appropriate"

"All right, then, you can take him out and finish him off, and report back to us"

Jean Valjean led Javert, as you would lead an animal by a strap, and went out of the wine-shop They crossed the barricade and climbed over the wall. They reached a little street They were now, out of sight Jean Valjean put his pistol under his arm and fixed upon Javert, a look which explained itself "Javert, it is I"

Javert answered, "Take your revenge"

Jean Valjean took a knife out of his pocket.

"That is right," said Javert "That will be better"

Jean Valjean cut the strap which bound Javert, and also the ropes He then closed his knife and looking at Javert, said, "You are free."

Javert was lost in wonder. He stood motionless.

"I shan't leave this place. But, if, by chance



Javert buttoned his coat, and walked off. (P.101)

I do, you can find me in the Rue de l' Homme Arme, Number seven. You may go now, Inspector," Jean Valjean said to Javert

Javert buttoned his coat, and walked off in the direction of the markets Jean Valjean followed him with his eyes After a few steps, Javert turned back and cried to Jean Valjean, "Kill me, rather"

"Go away," ordered Jean Valjean

Javert went away slowly

When Javert was gone, Jean Valjean fired the pistol in the air.

Marius sprang up, as he heard the pistol shot A chill passed through his heart Jean Valjean reappeared at the barricade and cried, "It is over."

Suddenly, the third attack began. This attack was like a hurricane The Government army rushed upon the barricade with all its might There was assault after assault In no time, the Republican group fell dead, one by one. Marius fought on, his body covered with wounds. His face was smeared with blood But he fought on, prepared for the worst As he was about to change his position, a ball broke his shoulder-blade. He felt himself fainting As he lost consciousness, he felt as if he could say "Cosette, I have been taken prisoner. I shall be killed." Some hand held the falling Marius

The Government, at last, had won The Revolutionists had fought well, but they could do nothing. They were all killed. The barricade was taken.

18. JEAN VALJEAN'S PATH

The hand that held the falling Marius was the hand of no government officer But in his semi-conscious state, Marius imagined that he was being arrested. In a few minutes, he lost all consciousness, so he did not know, that it was the hand of Jean Valjean, his dear Cosette's father, that held him up, as he fainted

When the shot hit Marius, Jean Valjean sprang forward with the agility of a tiger, held the falling man in his arms and carried him away

Where could he go? In desperation, he looked at the house in front of him, he looked at the barricade in front and then looked at the ground He could not cut through enemy lines. He looked persistently all round, in the hope, that some solution might present itself. A few steps from him, he perceived an iron grating, lying flat on the ground. The stone-frame that had held it up, had been destroyed, and it was, as it were, unset. Through the bars, he could catch a glimpse of an opening. Jean Valjean sprang forward His former knowledge of escape flashed into his brain In a minute, he found himself, with the unconscious Marius, making his way along an underground passage There deep peace, perfect silence, and darkness reigned. Jean Valjean was reminded of the day, when he had escaped into the Convent, to avoid the police. Then, he had carried Cosette, now, he carried Marius Then, it had been a question of climbing

up, now, of going down. He could hardly hear anything happening above him, and the fearful tumult of the wine-shop at the barricade had already become a ghastly memory He was now going through a mighty sewer—the underground drainage system of Paris The wounded man did not stir, and Jean Valjean did not know, whether he was dead or alive

It was not at all easy to walk through the sewer The height of the passage was that of a normal human being At some intervals, there were air-holes, which also served as light-holes Except near these holes, the whole passage was as dark as night.

In his early life, Jean Valjean had many times walked in darkness To a convict, darkness was enough light—safe light. Now, therefore, he could go forward fairly rapidly, with his human load in his arms. He anticipated no difficulty in his path, for there was likely to be none in a sewer All at once, he saw something. Behind him, in the part of the sewer through which he had already passed, at a distance which appeared to him immense, flamed something that resembled a horrible star It was the frightening star of the police

On the day of the 6th of June, a patrol of the sewers had been ordered, for it was feared that the vanquished might hide themselves in it. So, at that moment, the police were exploring these underground streets of Paris Some policemen thought, they heard the sound of steps in the

direction of the main-sewer, so the whole police squad began a search.

Luckily, the police officers were not thorough. They seemed satisfied that there was nobody in the direction which Valjean had taken, and turned in the opposite direction If only they had thought of going in all directions, Jean Valjean would have been caught When he saw the feeble light, he was close to the wall Now, when the light had gone, he resumed his advance and did not stop again. But the advance was very laborious The floor, on which he walked, was uneven, dirty, and sometimes slippery Fatigue had already come upon him. Old age had diminished his strength, the weight of his load was increasing. Again, he did not exactly know where these underground passages led Indeed, there was a regular plan of these passages and he was not sure, whether the one he had taken, would lead anywhere All the same, he continued on his way At one point, he stopped near a large air-hole. He removed Marius' garments with the ends of his fingers, and put his hands upon his breast. The heart was still beating. Jean Valjean tore up his shirt, bandaged Marius' wounds as well as he could, and stopped the flow of blood. When he opened Marius' coat, he found a pocket-book in one pocket and in another, a piece of bread which Marius had evidently forgotten to eat. Jean Valjean ate the bread and opened the pocket-book. On its first page, were written these words 'My name is Marius Pontmercy Carry my body to my grandfather . "

He put back the pocket-book in Marius' pocket. The bread had refreshed him He lifted Marius on his back again, laid his head carefully on his right shoulder and began to descend the sewer He felt that he was entering the water and that he had the pavement no longer under his feet It was all mud now. Jean Valjean found the ground very slippery But he must pass through the sewer Return was impossible. Marius was dying, he must not hesitate. Jean Valjean advanced The water rose slowly

First, it reached his knees, then, it was waist-deep Now, it came up to his breast. He felt he was floundering. It was only with the greatest difficulty, that he could move in the depth of mire into which he had entered But he still held Marius up, and with his indomitable will, forced his way through the mud Gradually he sank deeper Luckily, a few more minutes' perilous advance took him out of danger. He was, however, thoroughly exhausted Every three or four steps he was obliged to lean against the wall and take breath Once, he sat down to change Marius' position He rose again and walked forward in despair He must have covered a hundered paces, when he raised his eyes and saw far, far away, a light It was the light of day! There was an outlet in the distance. This realisation banished Jean Valjean's exhaustion He ran, rather than walked, and reached the outlet. There he stopped It was no doubt an outlet, but it would not let him out It was closed, and a stout, rusty lock greeted his eye met his

Jean Valjean set Marius down on a dry part of the floor Then he tried to break the lock, as there was no other means of opening the door

Must he perish there? It was certain, that all the outlets would be closed. He had thought that he would escape Now, it seemed to him, as if he had escaped into an underground prison All that he had done, was to no purpose He felt a deep anguish It was now, that he thought of Cosette. He was sitting meditating thus, when a hand was laid upon his shoulder Immediately, a voice spoke to him .

"Monsieur, let us go halves."

Yes, a man was before him This man was bare-footed. He had evidently removed his shoes, so that he might reach Jean Valjean without being heard Jean Valjean looked into the man's face.

It was Thenardier.

Jean Valjean recognized him, but Thenardier did not recognize Jean Valjean. Thenardier resumed:

"Come Let us go halves."

"What do you mean?"

"What do I mean? Monsieur, you have killed this young man. Am I right?"

Jean Valjean was silent. Thenardier spoke again:

"I have the key to this door. I don't know you But I can help you to escape through the outlet"

Jean Valjean now understood; that Thenar-

-dier, took him for a murderer, attempting to escape through the sewer.

"Listen," started Thenardier again. "I listen, comrade You have killed that man for his money Now examine his pockets Take out the money Let us share it equally You take half for killing him, I shall take half for opening this door and allowing you to escape."

Thenardier then showed him a big key

"You have seen the key Now, finish the business," urged the impatient Thenardier, as Jean Valjean stood undecided

Jean Valjean felt in his own pockets There was not much money about him Thenardier, whose impatience was unparalleled, soon began to put his hands into the pockets of Jean Valjean and Marius Jean Valjean did not interfere In all, there were only thirty francs Thenardier took the money At the end of the search, he tore off a piece of Marius' coat and kept it, intending, probably, to identify the assassinated man and the assassin, in the future.

"So you have not much money! Funny, that you kill people for petty cash"

Saying these words, Thenardier helped Jean Valjean to replace Marius on his shoulders Then, he went to the door and put the key into the lock The bolt slid out and the door moved Thenardier half opened it, and Jean Valjean found himself outside The door closed behind him

He walked a few yards, turning round every now and then He was carrying one who

appeared to the casual observer, to be dead. There were wounds on the young man's body. Jean Valjean would not be taken for a friend of the dead man, but his assassin Jean Valjean was no longer under-ground, but in the open, so he was very careful. When he had gone some distance, a tall man, wrapped in a long overcoat came into sight Yes, it was Javert on his usual rounds Javert's eye fell on Jean Valjean, but he could not recognize him, in that wretched condition

"Stop," he cried, "Who are you? Whom are you carrying?"

"I am Jean Valjean"

Javert went nearer Jean Valjean and, on closer view, recognized him

"Inspector, you have caught me again. Somehow, you have the knack of catching people red-handed Don't think I will escape. I have already given you my address Only grant me one favour," said Jean Valjean, wet with perspiration.

"What are you doing, and who is this man?" asked Javert.

Jean Valjean answered. "It is about this man that I wish to speak I do not wish to lose any time now. Please help me to carry him home and leave him there. That is my request."

"Who is this man?"

"His name is given in his note-book as Marius I met him at the barricade. He is wounded"

"He is dead," said Javert

"No, not yet."

"You have brought him from the barricade?" asked the Inspector.

"Yes. His address is, Rue des Filles du Calvaire; he is to be taken to his grandfather's house." At this point, he took out Marius' note-book and gave it to the Inspector The Inspector looked into it, and then called out to the driver of a carriage which was passing that way, "Driver"

The carriage stopped near Javert. Jean Valjean got into it, with Marius The Inspector sat by his side.

"Drive to Rue des Filles du Calvaire," Javert instructed the driver.

It was after nightfall, when the carriage reached its destination Marius was carried to a room in his grandfather's house A member of the family immediately sent for a doctor, and ran to attend on Marius

Jean Valjean and the Inspector returned to the carriage.

"Inspector, I have one more request."

"What is it?"

"Let me go home for a short time. Then you can take me wherever you wish"

Javert did not answer. "Driver, drive to Rue de l' Homme Arme No 7," he instructed

Neither of them spoke again, for the whole distance.

Jean Valjean wanted to go home and inform Cosette, about Marius' condition. He felt that he had done wrong, in not delivering Marius'

letter to her, so he wanted to make amends. He also wanted to make final arrangments for her, in case he was to be taken to the galleys

The carriage stopped outside the house. Jean Valjean got down and knocked at the door.

The door opened Javert, who had followed him, said, "Go upstairs I will wait for you here."

Jean Valjean went in He looked through the window, to observe what Javert was doing in his absence Javert had left

Javert had left, deliberately. He did not mean to arrest Jean Valjean that day. Perhaps he did not mean to arrest him at all — him, his saviour.

19 MARIUS RECOVERS

Marius lay motionless and unconscious in his bed. Fortunately, none of the injuries he had received, was fatal The pocket-book had prevented a ball from piercing his heart On his arms, were a few sword-cuts, but the wounds were not dangerous His head, however, was covered with cuts, and only the doctor could say, if they had pierced the skull.

The doctor arrived He examined Marius thoroughly from head to foot. Just then, Marius' grandfather entered, looking like a ghost. He saw the bleeding, motionless young man. His old body that had stood erect steady all these years, began to tremble with anguish, and he murmured: "Marius!"

Then, looking at the doctor, he asked, in a tone, which revealed helpless misery. "Doctor, you must know Is he dead?"

The physician remained silent At that moment, Marius slowly opend his eyes and his gaze rested on his grandfather

"My dear child, my dear Marius! You are alive! Open your eyes wide, my son" The old man almost fainted, as he spoke these words

The doctor dressed the wounds and, before he left, told the grandfather

"Take care of him He has excellent chances of recovery I find nothing serious. Only, be careful that he is not subjected to mental strain and excitement"

Marius had to stay in bed for several weeks. He was delirious and had a high temperature. The one name that he often muttered in his delirium, was "Cosette" Sometimes, he would sit up in bed in his delirium, crying out, "Where is my dear Cosette?" For four months, the physician visted Marius, twice every day, and it was not until the end of this period, that he declared him entirely out of danger Marius was, however, obliged to remain in bed for two more months, because his fractured shoulder-blade had not set His long illness was a blessing in disguise, for it saved him from pursuit and left him in peace

After the fever and delirium had left him, he ceased to utter Cosette's name, but all his thoughts were about her He did not know, what had become of her. All his experiences till that

day, including his happy moments with Cosette, were clouded in his memory. They floated like shadows in his mind. From the moment he regained consciousness, till he became a convalescent, he had not the least idea as to who had saved his life. He asked every one about it; but all that he could gather, was, that he had been brought home in a carriage.

One day, Marius and his grandfather were talking to each other. Marius was seated on his bed. The grandfather appeared to be in very good humour. Marius looked him in the face and said with a laugh, "Father I wish to..... ."

"Complete it, my son. I know, you wish to marry!"

"How do you know, Father?"

"Why do you bother? I know it. Yes, you shall have your lassie."

Marius was astonished

"Yes, you shall have her, your handsome pretty girl. I did not tell you all these days. I have enquired about her, from an old gentleman, who comes here every day, for news about your progress. I hope I am right, when I say that she lives in Rue de l' Homme Arme, Number seven Yes, my son, I learn that she is charming and modest. She has been sending you lint regularly. She adores you. Don't have any more misgivings. The matter is settled. Take her, be happy, my dear child."

The old man burst into sobs.

"Father, I wish to see her. I feel well Will you permit me?"

" No, my dear child You should not move. But I understand your eagerness She shall be brought to you Is that all right? "

The old man was as good as his word He sent word to Cosette, that Marius was very eager to see her, and that she would please them all, by paying them a visit Through the kind interest of the grandfather, Cosette and Marius were thus able to see each other again Cosette came, with Jean Valjean Marius and Cosette looked at each other for some time, without speaking a word.

The grandfather said, how pleased he would be, if Jean Valjean would agree to the marriage of Cosette to Marius Jean Valjean expressed his consent by his significant silence. Cosette's eyes brightened, when the conversation between the old men turned to her marriage

Just then, the physician arrived. The grandfather asked him, when Marius would be up and about The physician replied, that Marius would be restored to complete health, two months from that day, and that the marriage might be fixed for some day, at the end of that time.

Cosette and Jean Valjean left Marius' residence, after an hour.

Preparations were begun for the marriage. Jean Valjean did not want to conceal the fact, that Cosette was an orphan As he had been Mayor, he knew how to solve a delicate problem the secret of which he alone was in full possession of. So he arranged for the drawing up of a

notary's act. In the eyes of the law, Cosette became Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent, an orphan All these years, Jean Valjean had kept the savings he had made, while he had been a businessman; now, when he knew that the time for parting from Cosette had come, he transferred them to Cosette, not as his gift to her, but as the legacy left to Cosette by a dead relation of hers, who desired to remain unknown. Jean Valjean's savings amounted to five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs

When Cosette learnt, that Jean Valjean was not her father, but only a distant relative, and that her real father was another Fauchelevent, she was greatly disturbed in mind. But this time, she managed to withstand the mental depression and even to shake it off, because all her interest was centred on Marius. Yes, she had *him*. The young man came, the old man faded away. But she continued to call Jean Valjean, "Father"

After the betrothal, Jean Valjean and Cosette visited Marius regularly.

Marius began to look upon Jean Valjean, with greater reverence than he had had for him, all these years, and liked his company very much. He would often ask him, all sorts of questions Doubts came to him, about his own memories. He would ask Jean Valjean, if it was true that he had met him at the barricade. Were all his Republican comrades dead? How had he come to his grandfather's house, from the barricade? Once he felt desperate. Now he was

going to marry Cosette, not Cosette the daughter of a poor nobody, but a rich heiress It seemed to him, that he had passed through a tomb. He had gone in, black, and come out, white.

For many days, Marius hesitated to ask Jean Valjean his question One day, he made an attempt In his conversation, he introduced the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the scene of the barricade, and turning to Jean Valjean asked him;

"I suppose, Monsieur, you know the place."

"I have no idea of the place," answered Jean Valjean in a most natural tone

"I must be dreaming then I must have seen some one resembling him at the barricade," thought Marius to himself

While Marius was convalescing, his mind was occupied with the greatest of puzzles Who had rescued him from the barricade? He thought and thought, but could remember nothing. He could bring back to mind, only the fact, that he had fallen down, on receiving some gun-shots He asked his grandfather and others for information The members of his family began a regular search, for the man who had saved Marius' life. They succeeded in finding the carriage which had brought Marius home, that fateful evening, but the driver could give no information, that could lead to the identity of his rescuer

One evening, Marius narrated the story of his singular adventure to Jean Valjean and Cosette. He told them, that he had made eager enquiries as to how he had been saved from death

at the barricade, but, that no one could enlighten him. At this moment, he could not fail noticing the cold, but benevolent, countenance of Jean Valjean Marius said, "Monsieur, whoever it was that saved me, he is noble and great. Do you know how he risked himself to save me? It seems, he carried me through the sewer and when he came out, he was arrested. Why should he court arrest? Nor did he care for a reward. If Cosette's money were mine, I would . . ."

"Yes, it is yours," put in Jean Valjean.

"I would spend the whole amount, to find out who my rescuer is!" exclaimed Marius.

Jean Valjean was silent.

20 A TRUST FULFILLED

The night of the 16th of February, 1833, was a great and blessed night The heavens looked down in sympathy. It was the wedding-night of Marius and Cosette Marius' grandfather and Jean Valjean, both felt that a great burden was off their shoulders. When Marius had departed after his last visit to the old man, it was with painful disappointment and anguish at finding him rather cold; but the grandfather, who had not expected such an abrupt separation, had been most agitated. "After all, he is my grandson Why should I have dealt with him in that formal manner?" he had asked himself this question, many a time Would Marius return alive? Would he care for him? To whom would he turn for help? All these and

a hundred other questions had battered his old mind Now, when he saw Marius and Cosette together and recollected, that he had done his share in bringing about this happy union, he felt that his former neglect of his grandson had been adequately atoned for

Jean Valjean, also, heaved a deep sigh of relief His Cosette had found a safe guardian and he could now bestow his attention on other things Cosette need not occupy his mind, or hold his complete attention, in future He had transferred the entire responsibility to Marius, who, he was sure, would take the greatest care of her

The evening before the wedding, Jean Valjean had handed to Marius, in the presence of his grandfather, the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs of Cosette's legacy

As Cosette had become the mistress of Marius' house, she asked Jean Valjean, as her former guardian, to stay on, as one of the family. A separate well-furnished room was reserved for him in the house Cosette said to Jean Valjean, "Father, you should be with us" Jean Valjean shook his head, indicating neither approval nor disapproval

A few days before the wedding, a slight accident happened to Jean Valjean One of the fingers of his right hand was injured. The injury, in itself, was not serious, but he wrapped his hand in a bandage and carried his arm in a sling. So, during the marriage ceremony, Marius' grandfather had to officiate for Cosette's father

After the ceremony, when they had returned home from the church, Jean Valjean was seated in the parlour, on a chair, behind the door Cosette ran to him and asked for his blessing, on that happy day Jean Valjean gave her his sincere blessing and good wishes

"Father, are you pleased?" asked Cosette.

"I am pleased, child," he replied

Just then, a servant announced dinner The guests, led by Marius' grandfather, entered the dining-room and took their places at the table. Two large arm-chairs were specially provided for Marius' grandfather and Jean Valjean The grandfather took his seat The other stood empty. The Grandfather at once called a servant and asked, "Where is Monsieur Fauchelevent?"

The servant replied, "Monsieur Fauchelevent asked me to inform you, Monsieur, that he is suffering from a severe pain in his hand and that he cannot, therefore, give himself the pleasure of sitting with the guests and Madame. He begs to be excused and promises to come tomorrow He has just left"

Marius took Jean Valjean's place at Cosette's side The dinner was happy in all respects, except that Jean Valjean was absent

What had happened to Jean Valjean? As the guests were being taken in, Jean Valjean left his seat and slowly went out of the house, unperceived by anybody. He went straight to his old home, at the Rue de l' Homme Arme. He lighted a candle and went upstairs. The apartment was empty He went to the room, so far

occupied by Cosette All the tiny objects which Cosette had loved to keep in her room, had been carried away There was only a bed—that was all that was left, of the furniture in the room He approached the bed, but, suddenly remembering something, he drew a key out of his pocket and opened a box which remained in the room In it, were the garments which Cosette had worn, ten years ago They were all black. He took them out of the box, and laid them on the bed The whole drama of how he came to possess his sweet little Cosette, passed rapidly in a panorama before his mind's eye He thought of her rescue from Montfermeil, of his escape with her from Javert, of his stay at the Convent, of his adventures in Paris Yes, they were of the past. Now Cosette was Marius' wife She was not the little Cosette, eight years old, that she had been, when she had come under his protection But her old dresses had not grown bigger with Cosette. They, at least, kept young and sweet. Jean Valjean spread them on the bed: He looked at them For a while, he imagined he saw before him, the little Cosette smiling at him. It was just a dream, a vision. He bowed his old head upon the bed; his old heart broke, as he buried his face in Cosette's garments. Someone passing along the staircase, at that moment, would have heard piteous sobs breaking from the room.

The next morning, Jean Valjean went to Marius' residence, as the door was shut, he knocked. A servant opened it.

"Is your master up?" asked Jean Valjean.

"I will go and see I will tell him that Monsieur has come"

"No Do not disturb him. If he asks, do not tell him who has come Tell him, that somebody has come and desires to speak to him in private. Don't give any name"

The servant went in In a few minutes, Marius came out

"How glad I am to see you! Oh! how we missed you yesterday, Father How is your hand, Father? Better, I hope?"

"Monsieur," said Jean Valjean, "I have hidden a secret all these days. Now I must tell you who I am. I am an old convict."

Jean Valjean removed the bandage from his arm and revealed his thumb. Marius was perplexed

"There is nothing wrong with me. I wanted to avoid playing an active part in the marriage ceremony So I feigned this wound"

Marius asked, "Father, I do not understand. What do you mean?"

Jean Valjean answered, "You don't understand? Please listen; I have spent the greater part of my life in the galleys Is that clear?"

"You drive me mad!" cried Marius in dismay.

"Monsieur, I was nineteen years in jail for robbery. At this moment, I am an outlaw."

It was useless for Marius to recoil before the reality, to refute the evidence

"Are you not Cosette's father?" he cried.

"How can I be? Don't you believe me? I am a peasant My name is not Fauchelevent; it is Jean Valjean I am nothing to Cosette. She is an orphan

"I believe you," said Marius "But, why should you tell me all this now? You could have kept the secret to yourself You only disturb my mind I never asked you about yourself"

"I felt I had to explain to you, why I am not going to stay with you, or make use of the room you have so kindly provided for my use, in your house You wanted to make me a member of your noble family Should I not, then, tell you that I have no place in it? I am outlawed from the family of men. I am not one of you. I am an unfortunate, I live outside I have been answering to the name of Fauchelevent. But it is a stolen name. I now discard it. I once stole a loaf of bread to live; to-day I will not steal a name Let me no longer stain the name by associating myself with it"

"Poor Cosette! When she knows. ." But Marius could not complete his sentence At these words, Jean Valjean trembled in every limb

"Why should I live? Oh! Would that I could die!" he cried, in great anony.

"Calm yourself," said Marius, "I will keep your secret"

"I thank you, Monsieur," said Jean Valjean gently. "But Monsieur, just one more request. May I see Cosette every day?"

"You may come every evening Cosette will expect you"

"You are extremely kind, Monsieur."

Marius bowed to Jean Valjean and the two men parted.

The next day, Jean Valjean came to Marius' house He did not go upstairs, but waited below. The servant came. "Tell Madame, I have come," he said to him. The servant went in In a minute, Cosette appeared. She was adorably beautiful.

"Father, why don't you come in? Why do you want me to meet you, in the ugliest part of the house?"

"Yes, Madame. I am peculiar."

"Why this *Madame*, Father? What does it mean?"

"You *are* Madame."

"Not to *you*, Father."

"I am not your Father. Call me Jean. You have no more need of a father, you have your husband."

"Father, you make me unhappy."

Jean Valjean's face grew pale. "Cosette, you *are* happy aren't you?"

Cosette threw herself upon his neck. She kissed him with joy. Jean Valjean clasped her to his breast tightly, as he would do a child. Suddenly, he put away Cosette's arms and took up his hat.

"Well?" said Cosette.

"I am leaving you, Madame. They are all waiting for you."

Jean Valjean left abruptly.

Jean Valjean repeated his visits for a few

weeks. In order to avoid embarrassment, Marius made a point of being absent from home, whenever Jean Valjean came Several days passed thus Slowly, Jean Valjean withdrew himself from Cosette The familiarity with which he had moved with her all these years, slowly disappeared Cosette continued to love Jean Valjean, no doubt, but Jean Valjean did not appear as indispensable to her as of yore She became more and more cheerful, and less and less affectionate One day, she told him laughingly, "You *were* my Father, you are no longer my Father You *were* my relation, you are no longer my relation You *were* Fauchelevent: you are Jean. This is all very strange to me Who are you then? You have been so good to me, that I have no need to be afraid of you." Jean Valjean kept his usual silence, but answered with a meaningful smile.

Cosette liked Jean Valjean's daily visits One afternoon, Cosette and Marius went out on a sight-seeing trip, and did not return home, till late at night Jean Valjean came at the usual hour and learnt that Cosette was absent that day. He bowed his head and went away. Cosette had been so excited during the trip, that she had forgotten about Jean Valjean's visit and was still out, when he came The next day, Jean Valjean came as usual, but made no reference to his disappointment of the previous day

One night, Jean Valjean did not come Cosette did not take the absence to mean anything serious But she did not know that

Jean Valjean was lying in bed at home, having fallen sick The physical strain of many years, added to his heavy mental strain, told upon his shattered health and he was now a sick man. Already, Jean Valjean's servant had brought in a doctor to examine him The doctor examined him thoroughly As he left, he said to the servant, "Your master is very sick He is slowly sinking. Nothing can be done for him His strength is exhausted He seems to be in deep, mental agony, which is incurable Perhaps he has lost some dear relation Take great care of him."

The condition of Jean Valjean was slowly deteriorating. He could not even sit up in bed, without a feeling of uneasiness. One evening, he raised himself upon his elbow, with the greatest difficulty and, bending over the box below his bed, took out Cosette's old dresses. He spread them on his bed. He pressed them to his bosom The only witnesses to these strange acts, were the bishop's candlesticks, which lit up the room There were tears on Jean Valjean's old cheeks, as he sank back in bed, exhausted. But he could not lie at rest for many minutes together His hands searched for his writing materials; having found them, he leaned once again on the bed and tried to write His hands were trembling. Indeed, his whole body was trembling as a result of physical weakness and mental worry. But he managed to scribble a few lines. He wrote: "Cosette, my blessings to you. Your husband

is a very good man Love him well, when I am dead The money is really your own." Here he stopped, the pen fell and he cried out with one of those despairing sobs, which rose at times, from the depth of his being "It is all over," he cried, "I cannot see her any more. She is just a smile that has passed over me. I am not afraid to leave this world. It is nothing to die, but dreadful to die without seeing her. I am alone My God! I shall never see her again!" He wept like a child.

21. REST FOR A RESTLESS SOUL

Now, for Marius. He was having strange and surprising experiences all this time. One day, Thenardier, long forgotten, made his appearance before Marius and told him the story of Jean Valjean's adventures Marius would have avoided a long talk with him, but for the fact, that he was disclosing the history of Jean Valjean He was even tempted to put one or two questions, by way of elucidation.

"Am I right in understanding that Jean Valjean is an assassin and a robber?" asked Marius.

"What do you say, Monsieur?" asked Thenardier.

"I hear, that Jean Valjean was involved in many crimes. Recently, I learnt, that he robbed a rich manufacturer called Madeleine, ruined him and perhaps even killed him He also [illegible] avert."

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Thenardier laughed. He then answered, "Monsieur, you must understand that the information in your possession is not accurate. I know all about Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean did not kill Javert. He did not rob Madeleine. As for Javert, he committed suicide, because he had allowed a convict to escape, though he was within the bounds of arrest. As for Madeleine, Jean Valjean was Madeleine, when he was Mayor."

Marius stood confounded.

"I have documents to prove what I say," continued Thenardier.

From his pocket, he pulled out two papers. In the one, there was news of Javert's suicide and in the other, there was proof of the identity of Madeleine and Jean Valjean. Marius was now convinced, that he had been wrongly informed.

Thenardier continued, "But Monsieur, I have not told you one thing about Jean Valjean. He *is* a murderer. I know he is. I shall tell you about it, before I leave" He paused.

Marius was taken aback. Just a minute ago, he had seen the cloud of suspicion clearing from Jean Valjean; now, mystery surrounded him again.

"Yes. Let me tell you about it. On the 6th of June 1832, a man was in the main sewer of Paris. This man was hiding in the sewer. He had the key of the gate of the sewer. It was night, say, 8 o'clock. This man saw another man coming through the sewer, carrying something heavy. When he came near, he was found to

be carrying a corpse. Yes, murder follows robbery He approached the man and asked for the key, so that he might escape through the sewer-gate. A sewer is not the place for talking. So the other man opened the gate The murderer and his victim passed out You understand now?"

Marius gave no answer

Thenardier explained, "The man who carried the corpse was Jean Valjean The man who carried the key, was this unfortunate person." He pointed to himeself.

"Yes, Monsieur. I was that person with the key. Jean Valjean was the murderer. As to the person murdered by him, I do not know who it was But I took care to tear a piece of his coat, so that it might be possible for me to identify the victim"

He took out a piece of black cloth from his pocket and gave it to Marius

Marius had no doubt as to what it was. It was a bit of cloth from the coat which he had worn on the day of the attack on the barricade. The whole truth now flashed across Marius' mind. Jean Valjean had carried him away from the scene of the battle, and escaped through the sewer with him. That was how he had saved him. In his relief, he cried out, "The young man, whom you say was murdered by Jean Valjean, is myself. The coat is mine. I know why he carried me through the sewer."

For once in his life, Marius felt sympathy and some kindness, for the monster Thenardier A wicked person.

It was he who had helped him to dispel all doubts about Jean Valjean He left Thenardier abruptly and ran to the garden where Cosette was sitting. "Cosette, I have good news. Do you know who saved me? It was *he*. Let us go and see him, and express to him our heartfelt gratitude." Cosette and Marius rushed out. They found a carriage and drove straight to the Rue de l'Homme Arme.

"What happiness!" exclaimed Cosette. "We are now going to see Monsieur Jean."

"Your dear Father, Cosette He is a great soul, dear. He came to the barricade to save me. He saved many, even Javert, who was pursuing him like a shadow. He carried me through the sewer. Ah! he is very great. But he won't acknowledge it"

The carriage reached Jean Valjean's house.

Both the young people rushed to the room where he was lying. Jean Valjean saw them enter.

"Come in," he said in a tone of extreme exhaustion.

Cosette ran to him like a child. "Cosette," said Jean, his arms stretched out, trembling.

"Father!" she cried. She was moved by the sight she saw.

"Won't you both forgive me?" asked Jean Valjean, turning to Marius and Cosette.

Cosette sat upon the bed near the old man. Marius turned to Cosette "Cosette do you hear? He begs our pardon. But do you know what he

has done for me? I owe my life to him He has done many more good things for me He has given you to me But he is so great, that he does not want to take any credit for his deeds Ah! when I think of the barricade and the fight, my whole body trembles I went there on that day, to end my life, for I had become desperate But he rescued me from the jaws of death Cosette, your Father is an angel!"

Jean Valjean felt a new thrill, as he heard these words

Marius asked Cosette's father to move to his own residence, where he would have comforts, and good nursing "Father, you need rest and peace Come home Cosette and I will attend on you and see that you recover quickly. We have brought a carriage"

"I am not for any place in this world," said Jean Valjean from his bed

"No, don't talk like that, father. If you won't come home, I shall carry you home."

As they were conversing, the doctor came in and examined Jean Valjean After he had finished examining the patient, Marius took him aside and asked him, if his condition was serious.

"I can't say. He is an old man, over-exhausted His heart may stop at any moment. So he must be attended to very carefully," said the physician, as he left the room.

AlthoughJean Valjean's heart was palpitating, he beckoned to Cosette to come near and told her something slowly, faltering now and then. "Your mother was Fantine, dear child.

Remember her. Fantine—pronounce that name. She was a great soul. She suffered much and loved you and died for you My dear child, I have lived my life I had only one wish—To meet you and take leave of you. Child, you are in safe hands"

Marius and Cosette were blinded by their tears. When they came, they had not been prepared for such a terrible experience They had expected to see Jean Valjean, if not in normal health, at least better than they found him Cosette gently stroked his fevered body.

"Cosette, we ought not to have neglected him all these days I was a fool, to have waited for Thenardier to prove our Father's greatness."

After Jean had spoken to Cosette, he turned his gaze upon Marius. He put his two hands upon both their heads, as if to bless them

Tears of remorse rolled down the cheeks of both young people. The soul that on earth had ever remained determined to persevere, strong to suffer and ready to love, now entered upon its eternal rest . ..."as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

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